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For CSS, PMS, PCS & Other Competitive Exams



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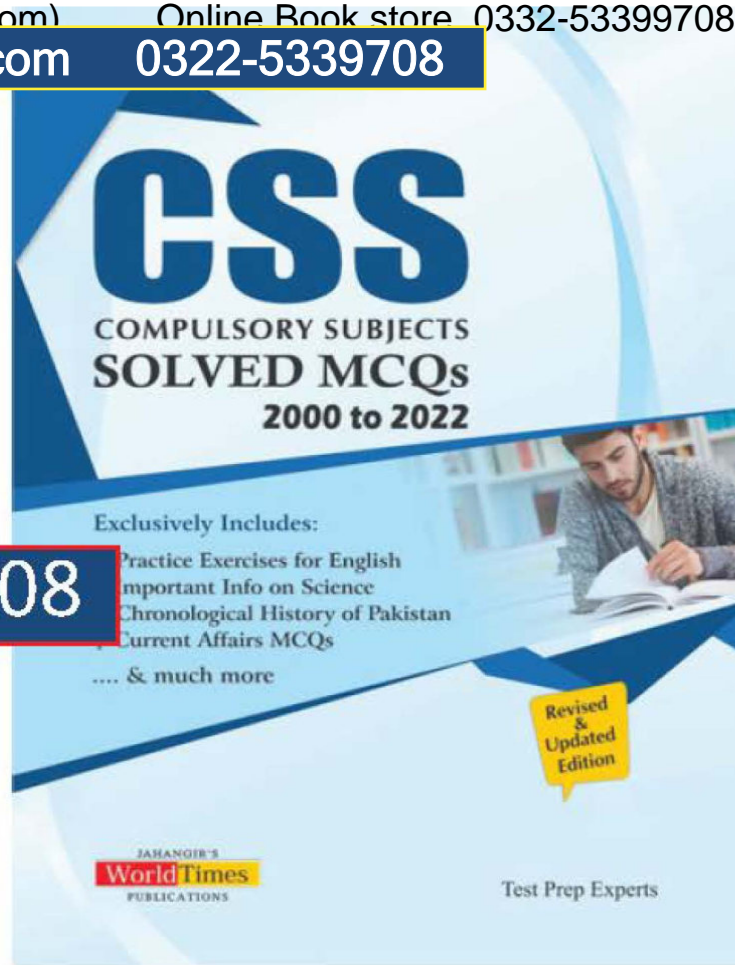
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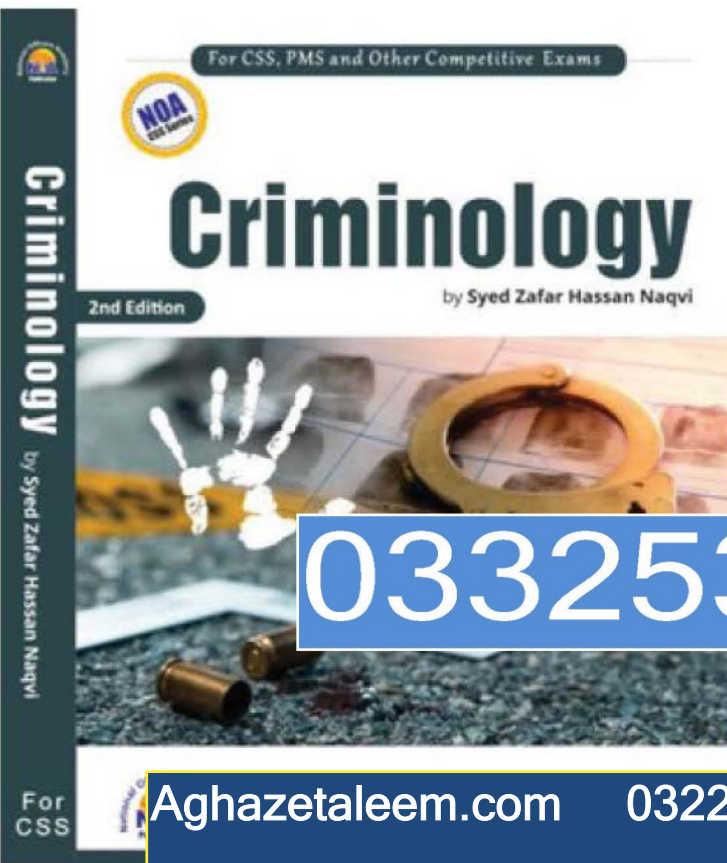


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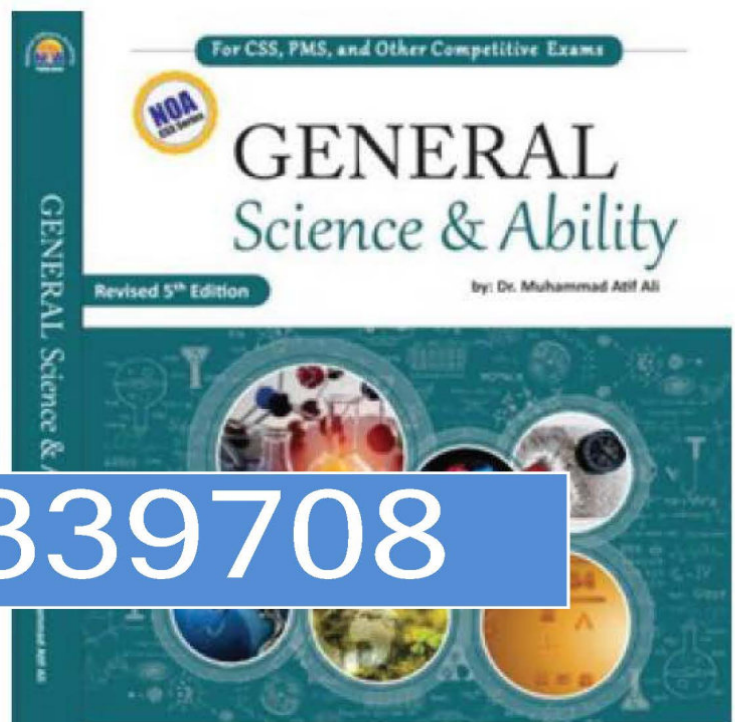
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Muhammad Tahir

## RESEARCH TEAM

Muhammad Naseer

Saddaf Qayyum

Ahsan Karim

Adnan Abdullah

Abeer Masood

## PRINTED BY

Global Gadgets (Pvt) Ltd.

Contact: +92 333 5757975

E-mail: globalgadgetspt@gmail.com

Published by



## CONTACT US

Plot # 3-D, Madina Centre

G-10/4, Islamabad.

UAN: +92 51 111 662 277

Cell: +92 323 50 45 013

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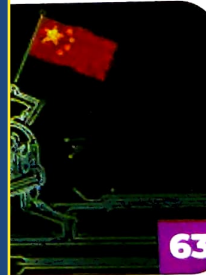
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## **EDITORIAL – Navigating the Iran-Pakistan Relationship –**

### **Glimmering Visions, Gaping Realities Pakistan's Path to Partnership with Iran**

In the ever-evolving landscape of global affairs, Pakistan finds itself at a pivotal juncture, grappling with a myriad of challenges and opportunities on the international stage. As we delve into the intricacies of Pakistan's foreign policy, it becomes evident that a nuanced understanding of its complexities is essential for aspirants of competitive examinations, particularly CSS and PMS.

Recent events, such as the visit of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, have brought to the forefront the complexities inherent in Pakistan's foreign relations. The joint statement issued following Raisi's visit underscored the importance of cooperation in various domains, including energy and counterterrorism. However, behind the facade of diplomatic niceties lie significant hurdles that must be overcome.

One such challenge is the Iran-Pakistan Gas Pipeline Project, which symbolizes the delicate balance Pakistan must strike between its regional alliances and its own economic interests. Despite agreements dating back to 2009, progress on the project has been hindered by external pressures, particularly from the United States. The looming threat of unilateral sanctions serves as a stark reminder of the challenges Pakistan faces in pursuing its strategic objectives.

Informal trade and smuggling along the Pakistan-Iran border present further obstacles to formalizing economic ties between the two countries. The prevalence of smuggled goods not only undermines legitimate trade channels but also perpetuates vested interests that are resistant to change. Addressing this issue requires a concerted effort to combat corruption and strengthen governance structures.

Proxy terrorism poses yet another challenge to Pakistan's foreign policy objectives, particularly in border regions. Groups such as the Baloch separatists and other proxies destabilize the region, hindering efforts to foster cooperation and development. Countering this threat demands a multifaceted approach that combines security measures with socio-economic development initiatives.

The influence of external actors, notably Saudi Arabia and the United States, further complicates Pakistan's foreign policy calculus. Balancing strategic partnerships with safeguarding national sovereignty requires astute diplomatic manoeuvring and a clear-eyed assessment of Pakistan's interests.

As future civil servants and diplomats, it is incumbent upon aspirants of competitive examinations to grasp the intricacies of Pakistan's foreign policy landscape. Analyzing complex geopolitical dynamics, identifying strategic interests, and crafting effective policy responses are essential skills for navigating the challenges ahead. Ultimately, Pakistan's ability to assert itself on the global stage hinges on its leadership's commitment to national interests and its capacity to navigate a complex web of international relations. As we confront the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead, let us equip ourselves with the knowledge and skills needed to shape Pakistan's future in the world.

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Mir Ullah Khan  
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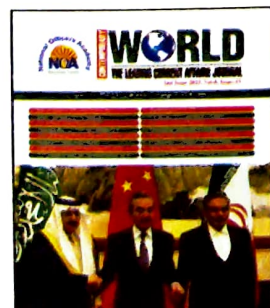
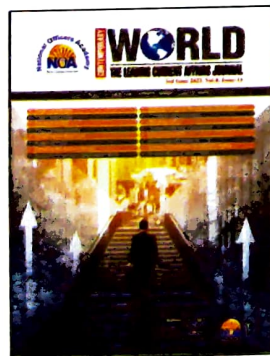
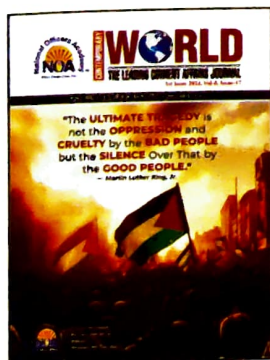
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### A Word from EDITOR's Pen

## ... Bon Voyage – The Journey Continues ...

*In the name of The Omniscient, The Omnipresent and The Omni-Benevolent for the blessing of choosing me for this endeavor*



Firstly, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to all our readers who took the time to provide valuable feedback on our recent issue. Your comments serve as a guiding light, driving our continuous efforts to enhance and refine our magazine to better serve your needs.

Secondly, it gives me immense pleasure to introduce the latest edition of our magazine. Countless hours of dedication and meticulous planning have gone into curating this issue, with a keen focus on selecting topics that hold utmost relevance and significance for the CSS/PMS examination.

I am confident that this issue will prove to be immensely beneficial for all those diligently preparing for the exam, providing essential facts and insightful analyses essential for the Current Affairs paper. Our special features and infographics sections are designed to offer a competitive advantage across all subjects, particularly equipping candidates with valuable information for the essay, Pakistan Affairs, and International Relations sections.

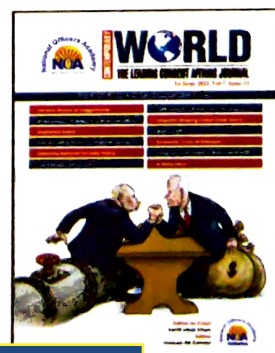
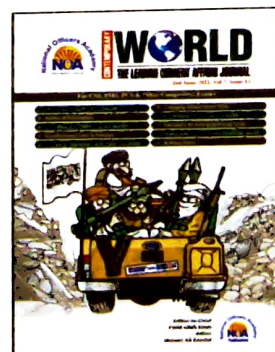
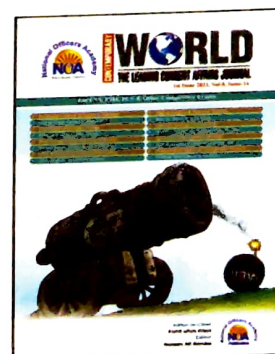
I extend a special note of appreciation to all the contributors who have generously shared their expertise and insights for this issue. Your contributions enrich the content of our magazine and enhance its value for our readers. Additionally, I warmly welcome articles from anyone else willing to contribute, as we strive to foster a diverse and enriching intellectual community.

Lastly, I invite all our readers to continue providing feedback and suggestions, as your input plays a pivotal role in shaping the direction of our publication and ensuring its continuous

improvement. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Mr. Farid Ullah Khan, our esteemed Editor-in-Chief, for his unwavering guidance, and Mr. Muhammad Tahir, our dedicated Assistant Editor, for his invaluable support throughout the editorial process.

At NOA Publications, we are steadfastly committed to achieving excellence in academic publishing and providing our readers with the highest quality content. To all CSS/PMS candidates, I extend my heartfelt best wishes on your journey ahead. May our collective efforts empower you with the knowledge and resources needed to excel in your examinations. Best of luck to each and every one of you!

Hassan Ali Gondal



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## S H A R I N G S U C C E S S

# Mr. Adil Riaz Gondal

## (CSS 2023 Topper – PAS)

### ➤ Tell us something about yourself.

Hailing from the outskirts of District Mandi Bahauddin, I belong to a humble family. My father is a Lawyer, and my mother is a retired government teacher. I am an aspiring soul that thrives to explore glories of life.

### ➤ What is your academic background?

I graduated in law with distinction from Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad

### ➤ What are your aspirations in life?

My only aspiration in life is to serve the masses. I might not change the society as a whole, but I can play my small role in the betterment of the society and prosperity of Pakistan, no matter how small it is.

### ➤ Why CSS?

I have two theories to explain my reason to do CSS. Firstly, it is a matter of survival of the fittest for me which is totally based upon my individual aspirations. Secondly, it places you at a position where you can directly play a role in the betterment of general masses.

### ➤ Your Favourite Quotation

**Not failure, but low aim is crime.**

### ➤ Your Favourite Book

**Science of Logic by Hegel**

### ➤ When did you start preparing for the exam?

Almost four years ago, I was in my 6<sup>th</sup> semester of law degree when I started preparing for Competitive exams.

### ➤ Has this journey been easy for you and what do you have to say about the difficulty level of these exams?

This journey was full of difficulties yet interesting. Every difficult task becomes easy with practice, patience, and persistence.

### ➤ How much time did you give to the preparation?

Started four years ago but gave complete 9 months purely to self-preparation; 3 months for notes making, 3 months for English practice and last 3 months for mocks. I attempted around 180+ mocks.





➤ **What was your study approach towards the deal breaker that is English?**

- ✓ Focusing the instructions of FPSC based on syllabus, question paper instructions and examiner reports.
- ✓ Not following the medicaster mentors
- ✓ Rigorous practice and evaluation.
- ✓ Avoiding crammed material and easily available sources.

➤ **Do you think one gets in the exam exactly what one had prepared?**

Not always. You need to learn the art of improvisation. You might learn to kill a dinosaur, but you have to improvise when you need to kill a tiger.

➤ **What was your approach towards subject selection?**

It was four factor-based strategy:

- ✓ Educational Background
- ✓ Interest
- ✓ Overlapping Content
- ✓ Scoring Trends



➤ **How did you divide your preparation time among different subjects?**

During the first phase of three months, I gave 10 days to each subject. Then 3 months to English papers. In the last three months, equal time to all subjects.

➤ **Did you consider the scoring trend while choosing your optionals or did you brush this aspect off?**

I did consider it but it was at the last slot.

➤ **Knowing that you are an avid reader, did you read all the important books of contemporary times?**

Not all, but I did read 70% of the recommended books given in the FPSC syllabus.

➤ **What were your optional subjects?**

- ✓ Political Science
- ✓ Public Administration
- ✓ Punjabi
- ✓ International Law
- ✓ Gender Studies

➤ **How was your experience at National Officers Academy?**

NOA is like a family. They have always accommodated me beyond expectations.

➤ **Would you like to give any special message for CSS candidates?**

Patience, persistence, and practice are 3Ps which I adopted to pass both competitive exams of PMS and CSS. If you are a serious candidate, adopt it.





## Strategy to Tackle the compulsory Subjects



### ➤ Essay

Be relevant. Interpret topic correctly. Avoid grammatical errors and flowery language. Crammed writeup is a sin.

### ➤ Precis

Practice precis, comprehension passage and translation from past paper rather than dawn newspaper. Pact marks are needed to be taken up seriously.

### ➤ Pakistan Affairs & Current Affairs

Focus on contemporary portion and give mocks as much as you can.

### ➤ General Science & Ability

Prepare all the topics in the syllabus. Focus on ability portion of GSA-pact marks.

### ➤ Islamic Studies

Give references of Quran and Sunnah only. Basic level concepts are more than enough.

## Bulls' Eye Hit in the Optional Subjects

### ➤ How did you substantiate your answers?

Made around 12-15 sub-headings and every head was explained by argument and an evidence/reference. Wrote around 6 sides each answer.

### ➤ Significance of Illustrations-flowcharts, maps and figures

Highly recommended. They add a lot to your marks.

### ➤ Length of answer and number of arguments

6 sides per answer with 12-15 arguments.

### ➤ One Window solution to score well in the optionals

Practice hard and evaluation from right mentor.



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Vigilante Vengeance: When the **MOB RULES...**

# Mob Justice: Case of Pakistani Society

Written By: Hafiz Muhammad Umar

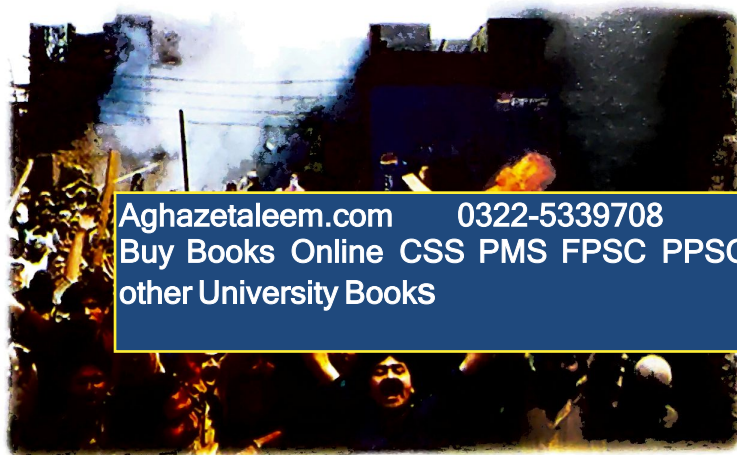
Seldom do we hear a term as oxymoronic and counterintuitive as "mob justice." Justice, one of the cardinal virtues of a functioning society, is a pristine value. By definition, it is something orderly and organised. From philosophical theories to legal injunctions, the term justice has been a subject of intense speculation and arbitration. Could something as orderly as justice be associated with a mob? One would be tempted to say no.

## ► The Homo Sapiens Herd

What is a mob? Most people would loosely define it as a collection of a large number of people. But that is the definition of a crowd. The two terms are often used interchangeably. However, they are not entirely the same. A mob is a particular kind of crowd that has two salient features: it is disorderly, and most importantly, it is intent on causing trouble or violence. A 1000 people walking past Liberty Chowk at 2pm on Wednesday are a crowd. A 1000 people engaging in vandalism on Liberty Chowk for a religio- sociopolitical grievance are a mob. Another phenomenon that arouses particular curiosity is the way a mob works. It is widely believed that people in a mob develop a psychology that is essentially distinct from the psychology or philosophy of each individual comprising it. Some have labelled this phenomenon as "groupthink". Terms like "mental unity" and "a collective mind" have also been thrown around. Regardless of the nomenclature, the key takeaway is that people who would never engage in a particular activity in their individual capacity may do so quite willingly when part of a mob.

The feeling of irresponsibility that permeates crowds, is perhaps it's most defining characteristic. A normal human being who goes around living his/her life, may be susceptible to a having a great deal of wicked thoughts and ideas. But generally, what stops a person from committing such an act is the feeling of being responsible, or on the contrary, the feeling of being held responsible. In both the cases, one can shake off such malevolent ideations and resume his/her life. But the presence of a large number of people around a person, all acting in unison, acts like a buffer to that sense of responsibility. In a crowd, one ceases to be an individual. Consequently, individual responsibility does not remain a barrier anymore.

Furthermore, mobs are highly suggestible. By their very nature, mobs are not passive observers. They are active and vibrant. This vibrancy creates an atmosphere where members of the crowd develop a sort of expectant attention. They are ready for battle. Since a mob can never be passive, it does not have the luxury to contemplate the consequences of its actions. And why should it? As established earlier, a person in a mob feels omnipotent and irresponsible at the same time. Combine it with the sense of urgency which a mob has, and you have the deadly recipe for the impulsiveness, mobility, and irritability that makes individuals do things that they would never do otherwise.



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It may be true that the law cannot make a man love me, but it can keep him from lynching me, and I think that's pretty important.

— Martin Luther King —



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## ➤ The Blind Poet of Justice

From our independent discussions on mobs and justice, it is quite evident that any attempt to synthesize the two would be farcical. Pristine values like justice cannot be handed out by mobs. Infact, what passes for mob justice is quite invariably, mob violence. It is quite tempting to label one's violence as justice. Afterall, all humans have a sense of mortality, no matter how rudimentary.

And most people do not like to think of themselves as cruel. But what can be more cruel than being a part of a mob that just lynched a young man like Mashal Khan or Priyantha Kumara? It is unquestionably cruel. So, the only way to avoid self-blame is to label this cruelty as justice. Infact, this false pride in justice is one of the greatest motivating factors for a mob. In their minds, the members of a mob are doing something quite selfless and honourable, a service to society. To them, they are taking it upon themselves to a job that the state ought to have done. Beneath this façade of justice, however, is only a primitive thirst for violence waiting to be quenched.

## ➤ The Pakistani Context

Pakistan has it's unique history of mob violence. The fact that it is a resource stressed third world country where fiscal mismanagement has almost always led to a sense of deprivation among the uneducated and unemployed masses plays no minor a role. The state has not been able to educate it's people and inculcate tolerance among the masses. Similarly, it has also been unable to satisfy many of their economic and political needs which has created a feeling of frustration among them. Additionally, the state machinery has been ill equipped to deal with challenges of this kind. Even today, the country has the most understaffed police department (in relation to population) in South Asia.

A unique feature of Pakistani mob violence is that it has almost always been associated with issues of religious nature. There are isolated incidents of sociopolitical issues leading to mob violences too, but religiously motivated mob violence has attained a unique pattern that distinguishes it from the rest. The 1953 anti Ahmadia riots in Lahore (which incidentally also led to the first mini martial law in the city by Lt. Gen. Azam Khan) serve as a key infection point. Spearheaded by the Majlis e Ahrar, these riots started as peaceful demonstrations in February which soon escalated into citywide incidents including arson, looting and the death of around 200 people. These riots were also responsible for the dismissal of the prime minister Khawaja Nazimuddin. This development serves as a precedent to remind us that from the get-go, the fledgling state machinery was incapable of dealing with the challenges posed by such quarters. More recent examples of attacks on the Christian community in Jaranwala, the sacking of police stations in Charsadda, numerous protests by TLP, and frequent prosecution of minorities (particularly the Ahmadis) shows that the problem has only worsened, while the the state's ability to deal with such challenges has not grown proportionally. Before venturing to find any solutions to the problem, the key contributors to this phenomenon must be identified.

Mob violence, particularly lynching, is a complex problem that cannot be reduced to a single cause or explanation. While it is true that poverty, unemployment and lack of education can create a sense of frustration and anxiety that may lead some people to resort to mass violence, it is also important to understand that these factors alone do not explain the problem entirely. One important factor to consider in a particular Pakistani context is political instability and weak governance. In some cases, political leaders may incite or condone violence for their own benefit, by stoking religious extremism or manipulating public opinion to advance their political agenda. In addition, the lack of rule of law and the inability of authorities to effectively enforce laws can also increase the sense of impunity for those involved in mass violence. It is important to remember that religion is often used as a tool by those who seek to gain power and control over the population.

## ➤ The Jury is Out

Considering all that has been written so far, it is quite difficult to pin blame on one actor as the one responsible for this madness. One would be tempted to blame certain religious voices that advocate



extremism, but that approach would be misleading. Afterall, no society in the world is free from extremist propaganda and people who preach hatred and violence. It is when extremist discourse opens up the path to extremist violence that the problem arises. The intervention of state machinery should act as a buffer in these cases that does not allow mass hatred to turn into mass violence. Those interventions have been few and far between in case of Pakistan. Illiteracy, poverty, and unemployment are also problems that originate from the ineffective policies of state. Similarly, the fact that a huge number of people engaged in mob violence have never been held accountable is another blot on the state's legitimacy. It has created a sense of impunity among the masses, whereby the problem has only worsened.

### ► The Whiteboard of Policymaking

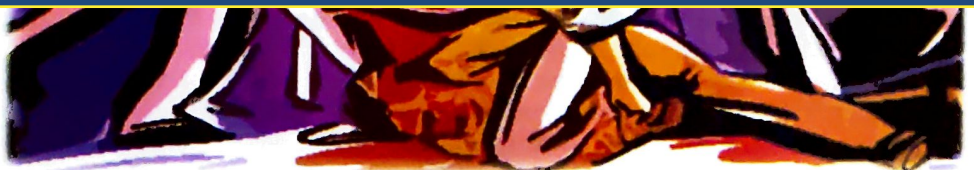
Do we have a solution to this problem? More importantly, even if we do have a solution, do we have the requisite political and administrative will to implement it? These are questions to which we do not have an answer as of yet. There are possibilities though. And one could argue that within these possibilities, there is a huge room for improvement. How a major political force that had collided head on with the state's interests was subsequently disbanded post May 9th shows that atleast in terms of capacity, the state does have the required muscle to solve this problem. But does it have the will? And more importantly, even if it does have the willpower to solve this problem by a head on approach, would it be a good strategy? Can violence be defeated by violence? If so, for how long?

Herein lies the great dilemma for the state. It can go about trying to solve this problem organically. We know that there are chronic issues that lead to this situation where mob violence becomes a reality. Illiteracy is one. Economic mismanagement that marginalises a huge percentage of people from a fair share in the financial pool, leading to issues like unemployment and poverty is another one. A population explosion at a rate of almost 2.5pc, which is the highest in the region, directly increases the risk of mob violence, especially when the capability of state has not grown to meet these challenges. Theoretically speaking, the state can effectively decrease mob violence by mitigating the impacts of all these factors. Better education (not just in terms of numbers of graduates but also in terms of quality), socio-economic uplift programs, population control and many other long-term solutions could be advocated. However, even if the state can solve these problems by this approach, it surely is a long-term process. We will begin to see the results of this process atleast after a decade. But what about the current situation? Surely, we cannot wait for another decade while the fear of mob violence breathes down the neck of each and every human in the country.



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Perhaps the state should shift it's focus. And it would be tempted to do so. Afterall, we are known for our affinity to deal with long-term challenges in an offhanded manner with a short-term approach. This perhaps is the most glaring feature of our policy making. The state can simply use it's monopoly of violence and decide to lock the genie in the bottle once and for all. There should be mass prosecutions of the people involved. Those involved in hate speech should be rounded up. Certain parties that are notorious for such cases should be effectively banned and their leadership should be tried and convicted. All of that is true, and perhaps just, but it is not a solution. It seems like a great initiative on paper, but it would look like a ham-fisted attempt in reality. Especially if it is not accompanied by sociopolitical reforms at a mass level that augment these aggressive steps.

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## Charting the Course: Power Dynamics in a Changing World Order

# What does a leaderless world look like? And who then runs the world?

Written By: Ms. Maria Gulzar

This article sheds light on the phenomenon of power diffusion from states to technological giants and how they influence governments and nations, paving the way for a techno-polar world.

### ➤ The phenomenon of power transition: Reflecting on the past 100 years

20<sup>th</sup> century history dictates the constant power shifts between world powers, and the fight for global hegemony through world wars, proxy wars, and cold wars. Before the advent of the Cold War, there existed a **bi-polar order of the world**—with USSR and USA on the opposite ends. Churchill's analogy of the "The iron curtain" described a world with two sides becoming increasingly dominated by the two giants. Two giants that were in a constant race of nuclear armament, and regional military and economic alliances.

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The end of the Cold War was brought upon by the collapse of the USSR, and the unchallenged supremacy of the US. There existed a **unipolar world**, in which the sole superpower exerted power and influence over global institutions, acting as the

harbinger of western, liberal democratic values. However, since the past two decades, countries, especially in Asia, have become increasingly powerful. The biased rules that favoured the West became more prominent, pushing countries to create smaller associations and alliances that could foster regional trade, and protect non-western values. Rise of countries like China, India, Brazil, ASEAN states etc. marked the shift towards a **multi-polar world**. The US no longer served as the cheerleader of the world, rather as one of the strongest players in the game.

### ➤ How the world has different orders and who's in charge of them?

A world that does not have one or two prominent leaders exercising control, leaves a world without a single order. Instead, it harbours perspectives, and entities making their marks through security, economic, societal and technological elements, often overlapping. Ian Bremmer, political scientist focusing upon global political risk, talks about co-existence of three different orders—a **Global Security Order, a Global Economic Order and a Global Digital Order**.

### ➤ Who's in charge of what?

- ✓ **Global Security Order:** A unipolar order dominated by US and its allies (NATO, AUKUS, US-Indo alliance).
- ✓ **Global Economic Order:** A multipolar order with shared powers between USA, China, EU, India, Japan.
- ✓ **Global Digital Order:** Not run by states or governments, rather technology companies that determine political clout, foreign & industrial policies, societal order and the role of information/disinformation.



I couldn't resist adding in the famous monologue from the film *Network* delivered by actor Ned Beatty that aptly highlights the imminence of an era when corporate power would eventually overturn democracy and become the nations of the world.

**"You are an old man who thinks in terms of nations and peoples. There are no nations. There are no people. There are no Russians. There are no Arabs. There are no Third Worlds. There is no West. There is only one holistic system of systems. One vast and immune, interwoven, interacting, multi-varied, multinational dominion of dollars. Petro-dollars, electro-dollars, multi-dollars, reichsmarks, rands, rubbles, pounds and shekels. It is the international system of currency which determines the totality of life on this planet. There is no America. There is no democracy. There is only IBM and ITT and AT&T, and DuPont, Dow, Union Carbide and Exxon. Those are the nations of the world today. We no longer live in a world of nations and ideologies. The world is a college of corporations, inexorably determined by the immutable by-laws of business. The world is a business. And our children will live to see that ... perfect ... world in which there is no war nor famine, oppression or brutality. One vast and ecumenical holding company for whom all men will work to serve a common profit. In which all men will hold a share of stock. All necessities provided. All anxieties tranquilized. All boredom amused."**

### ➤ The shift from power transition to power diffusion

Joseph Nye, political scientist and co-founder of the theory of neo-liberalism, expands upon the shift from power transition to power diffusion. Power transition refers to the change in power dynamics between states (from West to East), while power diffusion is the power shift from states to non-state actors. Even though many different types of non-state actors exist in the world today, those that hold the most significance are tech giants, or MNCs (multinational corporations).

#### Safety in numbers

NATO membership in Europe  
Joining dates

- Founders\* (1949)
- 1950-2000
- 2000-present
- Imminent



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**"The State still matters, but the stage is crowded and there are many many actors." —Joseph Nye**

It is thus imperative for us, as the upcoming leaders of the world, as change-makers, to understand the significance of tech companies and the ways they exert dominance and change in the world today.



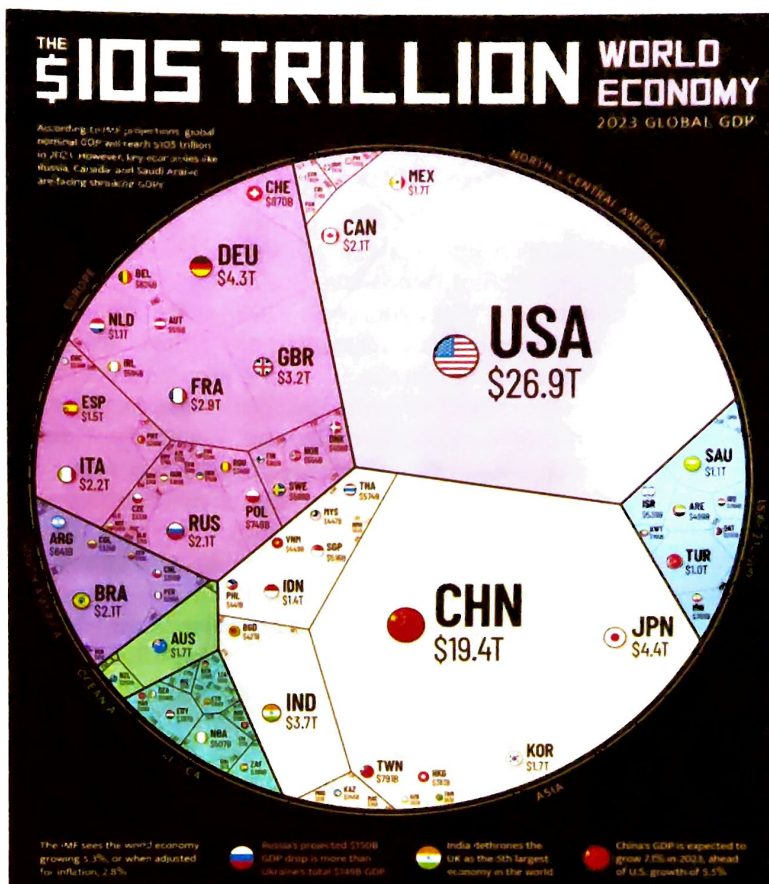
## ➤ Expanding into the Digital Order—How tech MNCs assert their dominance

### ○ The power of technology, data and its relevance

The 21<sup>st</sup> century is vastly characterized by technological disruption that has made tech companies dominant actors in international relations. The internet and its widespread access in the past two decades made three things very clear:

- ✓ Technology became extremely handy
- ✓ Computing cost fell a thousandfold
- ✓ Barriers to entry into the new age went down

With unprecedented amount of data and access to information, we now have the logic and means to create pandemics, viruses, hack into governments, and disseminate misinformation that can birth riots. Now, it doesn't only matter whose army wins, *rather whose story wins*. It's a complex interplay of narratives, and how these narratives are perceived by society. And history has proven how societal perception can be manipulated, through data, algorithms and the consistent interaction with content.



**"Today our identities are determined by nature and nurture *and* algorithm."—Ian Bremmer**

According to Anderson and Cavanagh, among the largest 200 economies in the world, 144 are multinational corporations (MNCs), whereas only 56 are countries, based on a comparison of the corporate sales of MNCs and the GDPs of the countries. The income of MNCs is 18 times higher than the combined annual income of the 1.2 billion people of poor countries (24% of the total world population). The study has found that the growth of sales of top 200 corporations is faster than overall global economic activity. According to the UN Committee on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), MNCs account for 70 percent of the total world foreign trade, which is US \$7 trillion. So we ask ourselves a few simple questions: how do these tech giants impact governments, and how do governments deal with the rise of MNCs?

### ○ Data deciding the fate of elections and governments: the case of Facebook-Cambridge influencing Trump's campaign

The world now runs on data; billions of terabytes of datapoints that can be transformed into information. This information can then be used to influence human behaviour, often entire nations. One such example is the Facebook-Cambridge Analytica scandal that erupted in 2016. This is 'Your Digital Life', what seemed to be an innocuous psychological testing app, extracted users' data through Facebook and sold it to a third-party, Cambridge Analytica. The latter serves as a data marketing and consulting firm that uses data to change audience behaviour by feeding them micro-targeted content. Personal data belonging to over 50 millions of Facebook users was collected without their consent by the firm, who



then built a psychological profile of each voter. These “psychographic” models, were then applied to influence American voters, through curated political content they were susceptible to, in an attempt to get Donald Trump behind the “Resolute desk” in the Oval Office.

**“If you want to change politics, you first have to change culture. People are the units of culture, change what people think first.”**

### ○ *MNCs safeguarding state sovereignty: Role of tech companies in preventing Russian cyber-attacks on Ukraine*

Even though the US led western alliance, NATO, has been a key determinant of military conflict in the Russia-Ukraine conflict, what has really decided the fate of the war is the role of tech giants. Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, tech companies have gone to war voluntarily and have asserted their positioning as independent international actors whose leadership capacity stems from their financial resources, impact, and outreach. And I say this because technology controls many of the factors that uphold state sovereignty—including cyber-security, satellite imagery, access to the internet, and the surveillance of information. For Ukraine, it would not be possible to counter this kind of warfare without the input of tech companies that have played a central role in the protection of Ukraine and its citizens. Below are a few examples of MNCs role in the conflict so far.

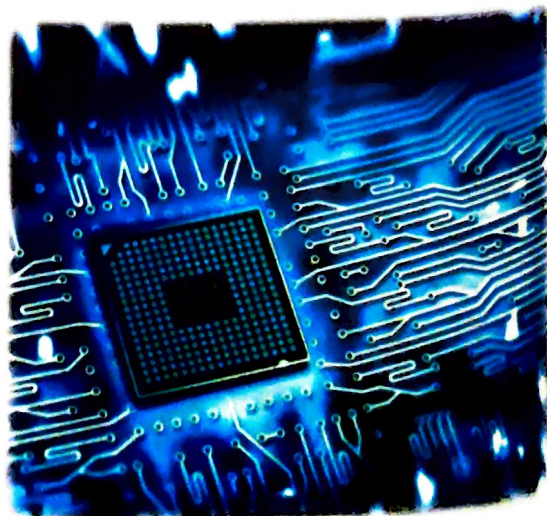
- ✓ Microsoft and Amazon, are helping Ukrainian public and private actors secure their critical software services by moving their on-site premises to cloud servers.
- ✓ Google has assisted Ukraine on more than one front: it created an air raid alerts app to protect Ukraine’s citizens against Russian bombardment, while also expanding its free anti-distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) software—Project Shield—which is used to protect Ukraine’s networks against cyber-attacks.
- ✓ Private satellite companies, such as Maxar Technologies and Capella Space, have also made their imagery publicly available through media outlets and social media platforms. This has been especially valuable in exposing Russia’s war crimes and fighting disinformation through the dissemination of images of the devastation wrought by Russian troops.
- ✓ Google Maps ensuring the accessibility of open-source intelligence about the concentration of Russian troops and the threat of invasion.
- ✓ Meta established a special operations centre to monitor and curb disinformation spread by Russia-controlled media outlets. Digital platforms such as Twitter, YouTube, and Google have curbed the access of state-owned Russia Today (RT) and Sputnik news in Europe and in some cases globally, following EU sanctions.

### ○ *The chips company that runs the World—TSMC:*

Not until COVID struck and caused a huge shortage of semiconductors, did anyone realize how important Taiwan is for the world. A country so small it could fit into Canada 275 times has become the flashpoint of geopolitics and the world’s economic powerhouse. And most of this is attributed to the success and sole significance of one company, TSMC.

### ○ *Why are semiconductors so important?*

Semiconductors have become an integral part of modern technology, shaping the way we communicate, compute, and interact with the world around us. From smartphones to computers, from transportation systems to medical devices, semiconductors play a vital role in powering and enabling these technologies.

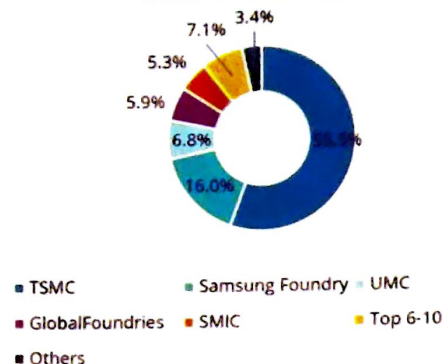




## o What value does TSMC hold?

Holding monopoly over the semiconductor industry, Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co or TSMC, has 51% of the global chip market with clients including Apple, Intel, Qualcomm, AMD and Nvidia. Any chip that is 7nm or below, TSMC manufactures 92% of it. The \$607 billion firm today controls more than half the global market for made-to-order chips and has an even tighter stranglehold on the most advanced processors. TSMC's dominance is such that its chief rivals are not companies but governments and policymakers.

Worldwide Top 10 Foundry Companies, 2022 Market Share



Source: IDC 2023

## o How is TSMC influencing states?

- ✓ **Consistent tug-of-war between Washington and Beijing over Taiwan:** On Sept. 16, senior U.S. and Australian officials vowed to "strengthen ties" with Taiwan just a day after both nations, with the U.K., unveiled a new security alliance, dubbed AUKUS, to contain China. Beijing is already sending air and naval sorties close to Taiwan territory with alarming frequency.
- ✓ **Biden's CHIPS and Science Act of 2022:** The realization of US's alarming dependence on TSMC and the reduction in its semiconductor manufacturing capacity from nearly 40% of global supply in 1990 to 12% currently, hit the US hard. Biden's CHIPS Act calls for the investment of five years (\$39 billion) for the construction of semiconductor fabrication plants, or "fabs," including \$2 billion specifically designated for mature semiconductors essential to the military as well as the automotive and manufacturing industries.
  - o The European Commission has unveiled a public-private semiconductor alliance aimed at increasing its share of global production to 20% by 2030.
  - o South Korea's government is offering incentives to drive a \$450 billion investment by chipmakers through 2030.

**Living on an island long coveted by a large and increasingly powerful neighbour, the residents of Taiwan have given some thought to where might be the best place to go should the worst happen. Some think it might be the hills, others historic buildings that China will want to preserve. By the same reasoning, some believe it is the factory run by the world's biggest computer chip maker, TSMC. — The Guardian**

## o How Cryptocurrency and Fintech can put an end to current financial systems

The appeal of cryptocurrencies lies in their decentralized, fast, and private transaction capabilities, bypassing traditional banking fees and controls. However, their surge has sparked concerns over unregulated market risks like fraud and financial instability, with detractors pointing to their potential for facilitating illegal activities and exacerbating inequality. The debate extends to their impact on national monetary policies, especially in smaller economies. El Salvador's adoption of Bitcoin as legal tender highlights their growing influence, even as global regulators grapple with oversight challenges.

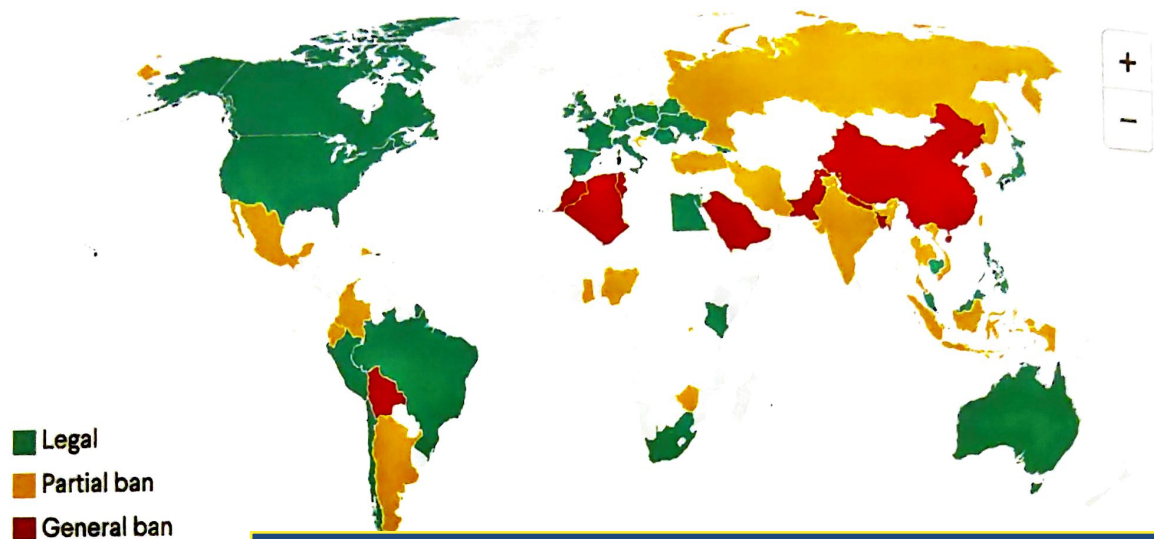
**The Silk Road marketplace was a darknet market operational from 2011 to 2013, founded by Ross Ulbricht under the pseudonym "Dread Pirate Roberts." It operated on the Tor network, allowing users to buy and sell illicit goods anonymously, primarily drugs, using Bitcoin for transactions. It was difficult for law enforcement to trace parties involved in the transaction because they only had blockchain addresses as identification. The FBI shut it down in October 2013, and seized 174,000 BTC.**



As of January 2024, 130 countries, including the United States, are considering introducing their own central bank digital currencies (CBDCs) to compete with the cryptocurrency boom.

## Most Governments Have Permitted Cryptocurrencies

Regulation of cryptocurrencies as of September 2023, selected governments



Source: Atlantic Council.

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RELATIONS

- How MNCs fuel conflicts and show complicity in crimes against humanity: The case of Syria

One of the core incentive an MNC has in setting up a factory or plant in an underdeveloped country is cheap labor. Another is the continuity of work without proper safety checks as international standards can be easily ignored with little to no accountability. This tends to lead to endangering the lives of the local staff by keeping employees in their jobs even though the safety situation deteriorates.

Between 2012 and 2014, Lafarge, a French cement manufacturing company, allegedly paid up to **13 million euros** to several armed groups in Syria, including the Islamic State (ISIS) and Levant and al-Nusra Front, to keep its cement factory running in the midst of the Syrian civil war and its atrocities. Lafarge kept the Syrian employees on duty on the premises despite the highly dangerous environment, repeated kidnappings, and risks to their lives.

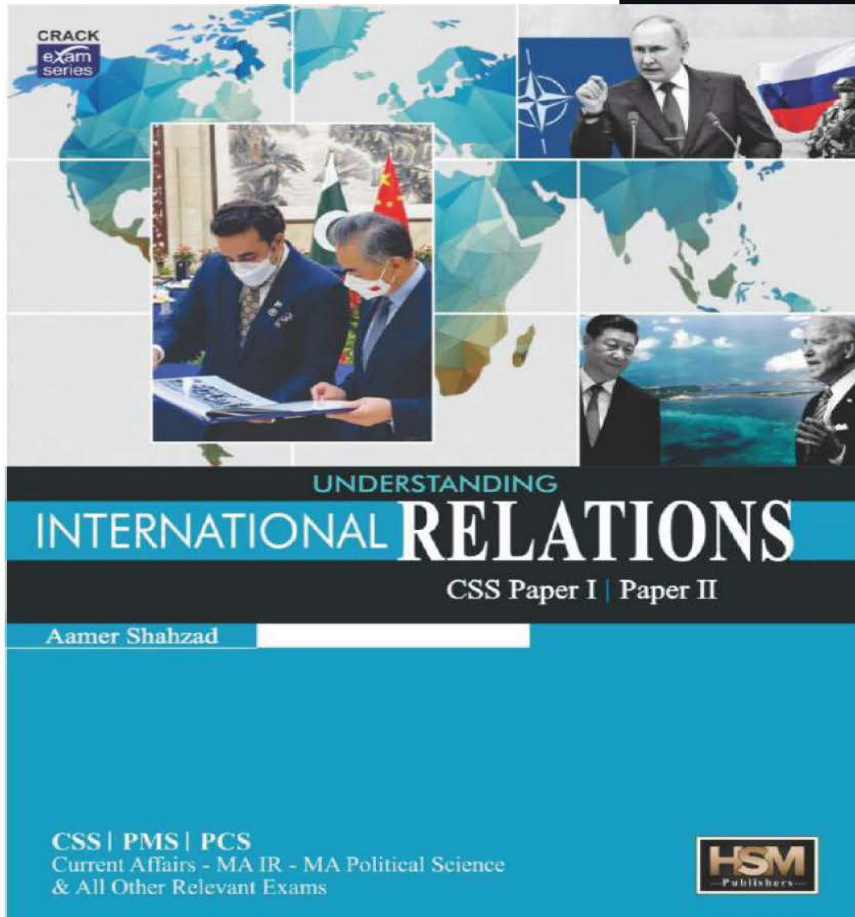
Lafarge has been the subject of an investigation into its operations in Syria since 2016, one of the most extensive corporate criminal proceedings in recent French legal history. **It is the first company, as a legal entity, in the world to ever face such a charge.** The company was found guilty of complicity in crimes against humanity and was ordered to pay \$777.8 million over the issue.

**"The Supreme Court confirms for the second time that Lafarge can be charged in France with complicity in crimes against humanity in Syria. Businesses that fuel or profit from armed conflicts can no longer claim that their activities are neutral. Companies which transfer millions of euros to armed groups that committed crimes against humanity must be held accountable,"** says Cannelle Lavite Co-Director of the Business and Human Rights program at ECCHR.



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### o Lobbying by MNCs and the incentive of FDI

Given their huge capital resources and production capacities, MNCs are able to dictate their own terms in economic dealings. For the sale of their enormous production, MNCs require access to large markets; tariff issues, access restrictions and similar "barriers to trade" are hurdles in this access. What MNCs need is a global system for the free flow of their goods. They therefore use their sheer economic weight to influence international trade rules. With their huge resources, they employ lobbyists with the highest expertise and influence at international trade organizations. In all, there are approximately 15,000 lobbyists (majorly representing business interests) based in Brussels, or roughly one for each staff member of the European Commission, the executive body that negotiates on the European Union's behalf in the WTO. Moreover, an estimated 17,000 lobbyists representing different MNCs are working in Washington, DC. The pharmaceutical industry alone spent US\$ 1 billion on lobbying in the US in 2004. The rich North, influenced by such lobbying, makes decisions in favor of the MNCs, irrespective of the economic, social or cultural consequences for the poor of the world. In contrast, in the Global South, MNCs gain control through the lure of Foreign Direct Investment or FDI. Having poor economic infrastructure and little capital, developing countries very easily agree to host MNCs. At times, their weak regulatory positions are subsequently exploited by MNCs.

### Conclusion



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The world, as we know it, is changing; the study of international relations through the lens of nation-states is a convention we need to outgrow, and expand beyond the horizons of technology, data and multinationals. What we have transcended into is a techno-polar order, one in which the state and non-state share the global stage, and both have overlapping powers that influence economies, security, and society. If the U.S. and China enhance their global influence through alliances with tech firms, we may see a "tech cold war" dividing the digital realm. Without such a scenario, digital entities might gain overwhelming power, diminishing state governance in the physical world. The imperative for governments is to collaborate with tech companies to address a declining global order, while these corporations need to heighten their geopolitical insight to support and rejuvenate this order. Unfortunately, the MNC-led globalization currently underway emphasizes economic integration and not justice.

**"It worries me that our world is becoming a global village only for the exchange of goods and information—not as a place of shelter, livelihood, security and dignity for all who live in it." — Nelson Mandela, "Bridging the Divide" Conclave 2006**



## Technological Frontiers: The Battle for Supremacy

# Chips & Artificial Intelligence: A JOURNEY FROM UNI POLAR TO TECHNO POLAR WORLD

Written By: Mr. Wahaj Rahim

The drastic and exponential dependence upon technology post the AI boom has shown the world that those who have access to technology shall now shape the contours of the global world system. Time will tell whether the mighty dragon emerges as the victor for the techno polar world or whether the eagle maintains its dominance.

The world is ever evolving, what is new today shall be old tomorrow; what was once thought of to be away from the reaches of man, has been made available to all at a click of a button; such is the power of technology. Man's urge to dominate the world either through military, organizations or economy has led him to knock at the doors of the prime mover of the society: Semi-conductor Chips. The thirst to become the best in the world and to ensure that one remains relevant in the global economic race, the need for any nation to pursue technological dominance has increased. The dependence of the world upon silicon and Chips has increased from a meager \$3 trillion to a staggering \$14 trillion. The two big giants (China and US) of the global economic market are battling it out in the field of science and technology. After all, he who holds the means to progress, i.e., the technology to produce faster and efficient chips, shall rule the world for the years to come.



### ➤ SEMI-CONDUCTORS: THE SILICON LOTTERY

The word silicon lottery has been used for those nations which have managed to create silicon chip wafers with high potential of hitting high clock speeds. To create the best of the best chips, countries need to give up an arm and a leg in the R&D sector. Not all countries have such an amount of hot cash lying around to be spent upon the tiring but magnanimously rewarding chip industry. Those with vision invested in the Chip industry during the bit coin pandemic. But, with the bit coin mining in shambles, and the chips being in the market for dirt cheap the world realized the great potential of ASIC (Application-Specific Integrated Circuit Chips). It was this realization that led to exploration of the world of AI in depth.

### ➤ AI, SELF AWARENESS AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE WORLD: A DEMOCLE'S SWORD?

The discovery of ASIC CPUs led the world to ensure that such machines be created which can do specific tasks efficiently and effectively. Thus, the idea of AI, albeit discovered decades ago, got a new fuel source to grow exponentially. Initial applications of AI were thought of as to read data and to use a gaussian curve principle to find the best possible solution from the data pool being provided. However, with time, the concept of data learning and innovation in AI led to its memory being built; understanding the best possible solutions to particular tasks. Consequently, the world saw a shift from unaware to semi-aware and now to fully self-aware AI models. Those who invested in this process, got to see their fruits in the form of opportunity costs. AI can perform a range of functions depending upon the processing power it



has and the data is has been fed. The uses of AI can range from finding solutions to complex surgeries to ensuring that the missile trajectories based upon the previous flight data be changed to avoid being shot down the way previous missiles were shot down or to remain undetected. All the sectors of life were hit by the great wave of AI. With no proper global policy, the rampant illegal feeding of data made the AI trained models so fast and intelligent that there is a looming Damocles' sword over those with a knack for creativity. For Example, with a properly training AI model, one can write a book which can take human author maybe months to write and to make changes to. Immersive stories for games and movies can similarly be generated this way. Consequently, there is a threat of the creative minded people alienating themselves from their craft because of their work being done by a machine for the fraction of the cost they charge. The Atlantic reported that more than 183,000 books were used without permission of their authors to train the current AI model Chat GPT. Similarly, an Industrial robot in South Korea on the road to being made selfaware killed a south Korean worker, thinking of him as an object rather than a person. The sector worst hit by the new AI wave has been undoubtedly, the education sector. Students have in great numbers flocked to free AI providing websites in order to ease down their burden of work. Resultantly, cheating cases, the blurred line between personal and computer written, academic dishonesty and lack of creativity amongst the students was observed.

### ➤ **CHIPS AND THE US CHINA COLD WAR 2.0: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE AI BOOM.**

#### ○ **US MASTER PLAN TO TAME THE CHINESE DRAGON: FROM MILITARY TO ECONOMIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL ENCIRCLEMENT OF CHINA.**

US heavily invested in the Taiwanese chip industry trying to ensure that Taiwan becomes so crucial to the world that its importance to the world and the possible backlash would deter China from ever invading it. As a result, TSMC (Taiwanese Semi-Conductor Manufacturing Company), rose to become a Chip manufacturing giant, first in south Asia and then in the world. Post COVID-19, TSMC was at least a decade ahead when it came to the manufacturing of 4nm and super cooled Chips.

#### ○ **UNFORSEEN CONSEQUENCES: POLITICS OF REALIZATION**

With A heavy investment into the Chip industry of Taiwan many experts thought that China will not dare to look at Taiwan anymore. However, China, not only in the past years has ramped up with its barrage of claims against US involvement in the Indo-Pacific and its vehement support of Taiwan but has also ensured that US's vulnerable interdependency upon the Chinese tech and labour industry remains a significant hurdle in the way of US shutting down the doors of technology to China. On the other hand, such huge investment outside of its borders allowed the passage for outsourcing of manufacturing to Taiwan, resulting in its semiconductor industry, with TSMC (Taiwanese Semi-Conductor Manufacturing Company) at its helm, emerging as the global chip manufacturing leader in the world. Moreover, many US companies relied upon the Chinese economies of scale model for their dirt-cheap production costs. Consequently, US not only Lagged behind in Chip technology, Chip research, but also, due to its heavy investment in Taiwan, could not compete with TSMC. In addition to this, China could not be tamed in the region even with the great control of the Semi-conductor chips in the world through Taiwan. Suddenly, all the guns pointed at China were pointing back at the US.





## ○ THE MIGHTY EAGLE FLEXES IT TALLONS.



In a bid to regain back its lost might and to end the vulnerable interdependency upon China, US introduced CHIPS (Creating Helpful Incentives for the Production of Semi-Conductors) act and American Inflation Reduction (AIR) Act. On paper, both the acts overtly tried to help the technological backbone of the country to strengthen and to bandwagon on the EV revolution; but covertly they were another form of soft economic nationalism. For example: the CHIPS act was oriented in such a way to ensure that the American companies are protected from the onslaught of the Chinese competition; moreover, the AIR act ensured that no American company benefitting from the act were to outsource its battery production or mechanical production from China. Seeing through the lens of realism we see that US used both Balance of power and neo-mercantilism to try to tame the mighty dragon. These actions not only

antagonized China but also antagonized the European nations of the world as well. Resultantly, the ground which US wanted to gain in the world, to protect its tech industry, ended up in a vacuum filled by China. For example, US left TPP but China filled in the vacuum left by US through the formation of RCEP.

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## ○ Xi's Retaliation.

Free trade suits the producers of the world and China is no exception to it. China, in order to protect its industry and to ensure that no other country gets incitement from the US's actions ensured that American Companies do not get the necessary good footing they had in China as before. The success of the first made in China 2015 drive, led to another made in China 2025 drive. Going a step further, Beijing introduced a ban on the exports of certain rare earth metals to the world, ensuring that its grip on the AI industry fueled by the ASIC revolution remains strong. In a reaction to the \$400bn sanctions on the Chinese companies, China still introduced a relatively smaller set of \$100bn sanctions on the US companies. Moreover, China has also decided to introduce its own YTMC (Yangtze Memory technology Company) as a major competitor to the TSMC.

## ○ EU: AN OTHER EMRQNG POWER POLE IN THE TECHNOPOLAR WORLD OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY.

EU has also introduced an act similar to the likes of the American CHIPS act. The goal is to ensure that their internal industries become non reliant upon the Chinese technology. Albeit, this move of theirs is going to make a very little change due to the magnanimous dependency of the EU on Chinese technological exports for example: Germany has been the largest trading partner of China for the past half a decade.

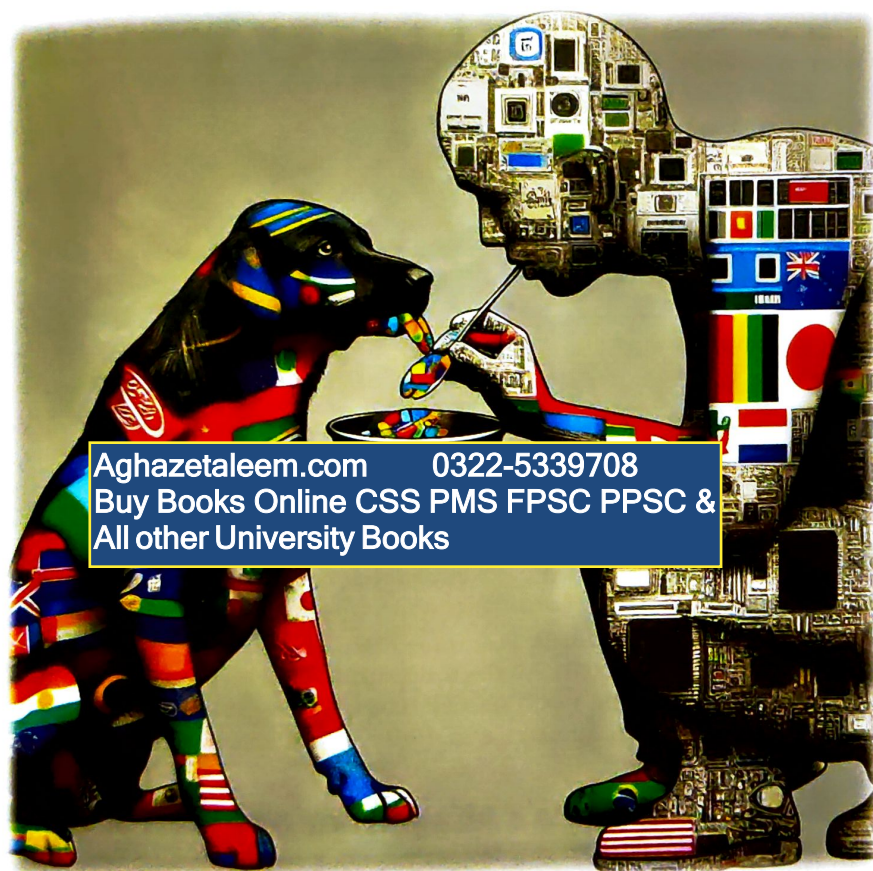
## ➤ TECHNOLOGY: ANOTHER NEO-IMPERIALIST NOOSE AROUND THE HEADS OF DEVELOPING NATIONS.

The technological development has once again led to the notion of 'Haves' and 'Haves not' in the International global community. Those with access to technology make others play a zero sum game under the façade of technological exchanges. For example: Israel in order to keep the Russians at bay and to appease the Americans, have provided the David's slingshot and Arrow hyper sonic missiles to



Finland and Germany for the first time. Resultantly, remaining significant in the eyes of the US and its allies, portraying it-self as a need of many nations and evading the criticism from its barbaric assault in Gaza. Due to this dependency of other nations upon the battle tested technology of Israel, Tel Aviv gets to play its own game in Gaza without any interference and non-existent criticism from the west. Similarly, no matter how hard Tesla tries to run into the budget car EV segment, it is bound to collaborate with Japan and thus Tokyo remains significant in the new world order littered with technological sticks and carrots to remain significant in the world arena. Developing countries such as Pakistan and India remain strung from their necks due to their overwhelming dependency upon Washington. One example of this would be of the suspension of the sale of \$3bn worth of drones to India and the sale of AWAACS refueling pods from Sweden to Pakistan to ensure that both the nations at kept at their toes. In-short, the masters are still the global north; however, their tool of rule has changed from military approach to economic and technological carrots and sticks policy.

### ➤ **THESIS: A SHIFT FROM MULTIPOLAR WORLD TO A TECHNOPOLAR WORLD IN THE MAKING.**



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Previously, when we heard the term multipolar, only the names of a few countries such as China, US and Russia came into our minds due to the ongoing conflict between them. Meanwhile, there are other contenders in the global arena, trying desperately to be considered a pole of the world, trying to punch above their weight category (India); but such nations are not considered as a dominant pole in the world in any domain possible. The world of the past relied heavily upon military and political clout. However, the world of today is becoming more and more technopolar in nature. Those who hold the key to technological progress can use follow the path of neo-imperialism to dominate or to influence the foreign policies of other nations. The countries which are behind in this technologically powered world will try to mimic the relations of their poles in a bid to gain their favours and access to the newest

gear. From Turkey, burying the hatchet and accepting first Finland and now Sweden's entry into NATO for the state-of-the-Art F-35 jets, to India buying new \$3bn worth drones for its safety. Every country's decision can be molded provided that you have the necessary technological edge to coerce, influence and control them. The sale of American F-16s and the heavy dependency upon the current J-10C of the Chinese origins shows the amount of dependency of Islamabad upon Beijing for its security. Even in the world wars, technological edge was a great strength of any nation. From breaking the enigma and the damage of the German U boats, to using the relatively less complex atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, it is evident that the reliance upon technology has long existed. However, the drastic and exponential dependence upon technology post the AI boom has shown the world that those who have access to technology shall now shape the contours of the global world system. Time will tell whether the mighty dragon emerges as the victor for the techno polar world or whether the eagle maintains its dominance. In my point of view, US has long lost its mantle of technological superiority and it's a matter of years before it is dethroned by either Japan or China.



## .. Unraveling Allegations of Genocide ..

# In the Dock: South Africa vs. Israel: A Landmark Case at the ICJ

A two-day session of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) was held in The Hague from January 11th to 12th, 2024. A petition was lodged by South Africa against Israel, alleging violations of Article IX of the Genocide Convention. In the petition, Israel was accused of deliberately aiming to eliminate a substantial proportion of the Palestinian population, with a particular focus on residents of the Gaza Strip. In late December 2023, South Africa ratified the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, thereby joining the rank as of the nations that have recently brought allegations of genocide before the International Criminal Court (ICC) outside of a direct dispute. Similar to The Gambia's 2019 lawsuit against Myanmar for alleged genocide against the Rohingya people, this action was taken in parallel. The International Court of Justice was urged by South Africa to enforce "provisional measures" in order to prevent the alleged genocide in Gaza, whereas Israel denied any genocidal intent in the area.



### ➤ International Law

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As the principal judicial organ of the United Nations (UN), the International Court of Justice (ICJ) functions in accordance with a statute that restricts its litigants to states. Israel and South Africa, both signatories to the 1948 Genocide Convention, are currently engaged in the legal dispute that South Africa instigated by invoking said convention. The purpose of interim rulings or provisional measures issued by the ICJ is to prevent either party from irreparably damaging the main case. Resolution of proceedings before the ICJ typically requires years. South Africa's comprehensive 84-page submission in this specific instance advocated for a range of actions, such as the urgent cessation of Israel's military activities in Gaza and a proscription of any conduct against the Palestinian people that violates the Genocide Convention.

### ➤ Genocide Convention's Legacy: South Africa's Allegations & Pursuit of Justice

Historical significance is attributed to the 1948 Genocide Convention, which was the inaugural human rights treaty ratified by the United Nations General Assembly. Article II of the Convention provides the foundation for South Africa's case, which stems from a commitment to prevent atrocities such as the Holocaust. Genocide, as defined in the article, comprises various actions that result in the death of individuals belonging to a national, racial, ethnic, or religious group; inflict severe physical and psychological suffering upon the group's members; and intentionally subject them to living conditions that are designed to induce physical destruction, whether in its entirety or in part. South Africa has levied allegations against Israel on multiple fronts, including the infliction of hunger, dehydration, and starvation in Gaza through the obstruction of adequate humanitarian assistance, the interruption of vital resources such as water, food, fuel, and electricity, and the failure to furnish housing and sanitation facilities to the 1.9 million internally displaced Palestinians residing in Gaza. South Africa emphasized the 23,000 fatalities that occurred during the proceedings, with women and children comprising 70% of the victims. South Africa also emphasized a number of statements attributed to Israeli state representatives, including the President, Prime Minister, and Minister of Defense, which demonstrated a "genocidal intent." These statements were issued at the highest levels of government.



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## ➤ Depicting Genocidal Intent: Evidence & Historical Context in South Africa's Case

Without a doubt, throughout the proceedings, attorneys for South Africa found themselves significantly dependent on statements and remarks ascribed to Israeli military leaders and officials. Their position was that genocidal intent could be deduced from the conduct and utterances of these individuals. Furthermore, they relied heavily on statements made by representatives of international organizations, including the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the United Nations (UN), and the World Health Organization (WHO). By contrasting hospitals with battlegrounds, these quotations underscored the dire circumstances that civilians in Gaza were forced to endure and emphasized the breakdown of the healthcare system. "In Gaza, nowhere is safe," the attorneys emphasized, due to the constant barrage by the Israel Defense Forces.

### ISRAEL'S WAR ON GAZA

## Judges at the International Court of Justice

The ICJ, also known as the World Court, is the highest United Nations legal body. The court, comprising 15 judges, will evaluate South Africa's case - whether Israel's military operation in Gaza amounts to an act of genocide under the UN convention.



Term ends Feb 2024  
President Donoghue  
United States



Term ends Feb 2024  
Vice-President Georgvina  
Russia



Judge Xue  
China



Judge Abraham  
France



Judge Charlesworth  
Australia



Judge Brant



Judge Nolte



Judge Bhandari



Term ends Feb 2024  
Judge Robinson



Judge Iwasawa  
Japan

In addition, the relevance of historical events, such as the 'Nakba' of 1948, 75 years of 'apartheid', 56 years of occupation, and 16 years of siege, was emphasised by the South African legal team in relation to the ongoing military operations. The mass exodus of Palestinians that occurred throughout the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict is referred to in Arabic as "Nakba," which translates to "catastrophe." The Israeli prime minister's remark that alluded to the biblical account of Amalek was also emphasized in South Africa's presentation. The Israelites are depicted in the Hebrew Bible as having a perceived obligation to eradicate the Amalekites, who are regarded as adversaries and rivals of the Israelites. South Africa employed this citation to denote "genocidal intent," implying that Israeli forces

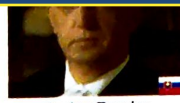
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Judge Salam  
Lebanon



Term ends Feb 2024  
Judge Bennouna  
Morocco



Judge Tomka  
Slovakia



Judge Yusuf  
Somalia



Judge Sebutinde  
Uganda

Judges are elected for nine-year terms. Four new judges will start on February 6, 2024.

South Africa will be represented by former Deputy Chief Justice Dikgang Moseneke while Israel's appointee will be former Supreme Court President Aharon Barak.



National Officers  
ACADEMY

employ it to rationalize the loss of life among Gaza's civilian population.

## ➤ Israel's Defense: Challenging Allegations of Genocidal Intent

Israel refuted any assumption of 'genocidal intent' in its ongoing campaign during a presentation on January 12, 2024. The country maintained that its actions were lawful and in accordance with established norms of international law. The rights to self-defense formed the foundation of the Israeli position. Israel maintained that the objective of its operations in Gaza was to safeguard the area's inhabitants, not cause damage to them. As per the statement by Israel, the primary objective of these operations was to eradicate the capability of Hamas and its affiliated organizations to pose a threat to Israel. "A war that Israel did not initiate" was criticized by the representative of Israel as an application of the term "genocide." The claim that statements ascribed to the Prime Minister or Defense Minister of Israel implied genocidal intent was refuted by them. They contended that South Africa's presentation merely misconstrued routine rhetoric. Hamas was held accountable by Israel for its utilization of civilians as human shields in order to inflict the most damage possible on the civilian population, while South Africa was accused of relying on statistics supplied by Hamas concerning casualties. Israel maintained that deliberate genocidal intent was not indicated by unintended civilian casualties sustained in the pursuit of lawful military objectives.



## ➤ Solidarity in Struggle: South Africa's Historical Alliance with Palestine

The enduring backing of South Africa for the Palestinian cause can be traced back to its dominant party, the African National Congress (ANC), which has maintained historical ties with the Palestinian liberation movements and the people of Gaza and Palestine. The aforementioned historical connection significantly influences South Africa's proactive stance in bringing Israel before the International Court of Justice. The ANC, which was previously outlawed as a liberation movement, was instrumental in the armed resistance against the ethnically discriminatory white apartheid regime in South Africa. Palestine provided unwavering assistance to the ANC in its endeavors. The ANC perceives a correlation between its historical tribulations and the present predicament faced by the Palestinian people. Former Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and former South African president Nelson Mandela, a prominent figure in the anti-apartheid movement, maintained a close friendship. Mandela renownedly declared that the attainment of Palestinian independence was indispensable for the complete liberation of South Africa, thereby emphasizing the interdependence of these historical conflicts.

## ➤ ICJ's Judgment and Its Impact: Pursuing Accountability in the Gaza Conflict

Following two weeks of preliminary deliberations, the International Court of Justice rendered a momentous decision on January 26, 2024, requiring Israel to implement all requisite precautions to avert actions classified as Genocide Convention violations. Although the Court refrained from granting South Africa's request for an immediate cessation of hostilities in Gaza, it did order Israel to allow the passage of humanitarian assistance and essential services through Palestinian territory. Assumed to impose legally binding obligations on the international community, the interim judgment requires Israel to submit a one-month report to the Court detailing the measures it has implemented to ensure adherence.

The International Court of Justice's ruling considers statements made by high-ranking Israeli officials, including Defense Minister Yoav Gallant's proclamation of a "complete siege" of Gaza and his depiction of the conflict as a struggle against "human animals." The extent to which Israel will adhere to the ruling is a subject of debate, given that the Court lacks enforcement authority, which casts doubt on Israel's compliance. In effort to maintain international pressure on Israel to cease hostilities in the Gaza Strip, South Africa requests that the United Nations Security Council delineate the steps it will undertake to implement an interim judgment from the International Court of Justice. Despite possessing the authority to enact measures, the veto power of its permanent members of the UN Security Council renders such actions ineffective. Israel has maintained its military offensive despite the Court's rulings, resulting in the deaths of hundreds more Palestinians and, according to the most recent statistics, bringing the total number of Palestinian casualties in the conflict to over 26,700.

### ISRAEL'S WAR ON GAZA

## Israel's defence in ICJ genocide hearing

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague has held the second of a two-day hearing in South Africa's genocide case against Israel. Israel's arguments were:



Legal adviser to Israel's Foreign Ministry, Tal Becker, and British jurist Malcolm Shaw sit inside the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague (Thilo Schumacher/REUTERS)

#### ■ Right to self-defence

Israel argued that Hamas's attack on October 7 is what started the Gaza war, and that Israel has a right to defend itself under international law.

#### ■ Genocidal intent

The Israeli legal team said South Africa's accusations that Tel Aviv has an inherent intent to "destroy" the Palestinian people are based on "random assertions" that were "taken out of context".

#### ■ Genocidal actions

In response to allegations of actual genocidal actions, including indiscriminate killings of civilians, Israel's lawyers claimed that Hamas was using civilians as human shields and Israeli troops were trying to "minimise" civilian harm.

#### ■ Lack of jurisdiction

Israel claimed that South Africa had not attempted to resolve their "dispute" prior to bringing it to the court, a requirement for the court to have jurisdiction. Israel asserted that South Africa gave only a few days notice, and rejected an offer of dialogue, about the genocide claims before applying to the court.

### MEMBERS OF ISRAEL LEGAL TEAM








**ISRAEL'S WAR ON GAZA****How did the ICJ vote?**

The International Court of Justice concludes in its interim ruling that it has the jurisdiction to order provisional measures and some of South Africa's allegations against Israel could in principle fall under the 1948 Genocide Convention.

**Here's how the judges voted on the six provisional measures the ICJ ordered:**

















- Israel must take all possible measures to prevent acts as outlined in Article 2 of the 1948 Genocide Convention.
- Israel must ensure its military does not carry out any of the above actions.
- Israel must prevent the destruction of evidence of war crimes in Gaza and allow fact-finding missions access.
- Israel must submit a report on how it intends to deliver all of the above to the court within one month of the judgement.

**Measures approved by votes of 15-2**

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- Israel must prevent and punish incitement of genocidal acts.
- Israel must ensure the delivery of basic services and essential humanitarian aid to civilians in Gaza.

**Measures approved by votes of 16-1**

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### ➤ **Shaping International Discourse: Implications of South Africa's ICJ Petition**

Already generating considerable interest not only in Israel but also internationally, South Africa's petition to the ICJ has had a substantial influence. This case serves as a poignant reminder of the potential ramifications that could arise for Israel's international reputation, driving a reevaluation of its reaction to the recent Hamas assault. There is an opportunity for international law, and international humanitarian law in particular, to establish a unified framework for evaluating such matters as the ICJ proceedings progress. However, in order for the ICJ to be effective, its credibility must be preserved within the parameters of state consent. Furthermore, a coordinated global effort is required to exert pressure on Israel to stop its activities in Gaza, underscoring the critical nature of an immediate cessation of hostilities by all involved factions in order to alleviate the unfathomable plight of the Gaza civilian population.



Tales of **Unspeakable Horrors, Manipulations & Endurance**

# Decoding Crisis: Many Dimensions of **Israel's War on Gaza**



The International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the Security Council have expressed concern about Israel's war against Gaza, citing violations of the UN Charter of Human Rights and war regulations. The United States and its allies, including the European Union and NATO, have vetoed proposals for a truce in the Security Council. UN organizations are concerned about the devastation in Gaza and have called for an end to the conflict. Millions of people around the world have protested Israel's crimes and demanded

respect for Palestinian rights. The Palestinians have launched a campaign to explain the history of their struggle, as well as the involvement of the United States and European countries in establishing and maintaining Israel. They promote false information about Israel in the media, dehumanize Arabs and Muslims, spend billions of dollars to purchase politicians in the United States, and support Israel with military equipment and intelligence. Religion is important in this issue, making it impossible to have a rational discussion. Israel has used Bible texts to defend its control and intentions to expand into Palestine, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, and Iraq. Israel has played an important role in assisting the united governments and its allies in weakening and dividing powerful Arab governments along ethnic and political lines, reducing their ability to defend themselves in an armed battle. This has resulted in increasing respect for Palestinians and their society, but it has also made it more difficult for Westerners to work with their leaders.

## ➤ **Unyielding Cruelty: Israel's Pursuit of Dominance in Gaza**

A spokesman for the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) stated that the conflict in Gaza will continue until it is done. The Israeli Prime Minister agreed with the statement. The war in Rafah is terrifying because it is so severe. Israel is prepared to slaughter and relocate 1.5 million Palestinians under the pretense of prisoners. The US administration has advised Benjamin Netanyahu that the Rafah offensive is awful and should not happen, but it does not appear that their efforts are working. Israel is determined to develop illegal settlements in Gaza, which would result in significant damage and deaths in the Rafah area. The neighborhood is quite populated, with approximately 1.5 million people living there. Three people were killed when Israel used a drone to attack the Islamic Resistance. The Islamic Resistance has warned the US that it will attack US targets in Iraq and Jordan. Even though the US and UK have been attacking Yemen from the air, Houthi attacks on commerce ships have increased. President Biden has stated that they will respond appropriately, and global clamor for a ceasefire is increasing. Major nations, such as Russia and China, want the United States to grasp how people around the world feel



about the war as it worsens, potentially leading to further difficulties in the region. Israel intends to occupy Gaza in a variety of methods, including the completion of projects such as a new canal connecting the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, which is claimed to have US backing. Some of the strategic goals include taking conquering Gaza, expanding Israel, and gaining financial control over Middle Eastern states. Arab countries are reluctant to become engaged because they are concerned about Israel's financial and nuclear power. Israel's aggressive measures are escalating, particularly in the Gulf States and Saudi Arabia, where the government is increasing its investments in trade, manufacturing, and real estate. The majority of the laborers and workers are from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh, therefore changes in the Middle East will have an impact on South Asia. In the end, Israel will proceed with its planned onslaught on Rafah, which will murder many people and destroy much property. Foreign ministers from Russia, Australia, and other countries have urged the world not to close its eyes.

### ➤ **Confronting Contention: Netanyahu's Deceitful Agenda against Gaza**

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has disclosed a hardline plan for Gaza following the conflict, escalating tensions between Israel and its Western allies, particularly the United States and the UK. Tel Aviv plans to establish a security buffer zone on the Palestinian side of the border with the Gaza Strip in order to prevent terrorist elements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip from strengthening and posing risks to Israel. However, this idea is unrealistic and will ultimately fail. The strategy demands for Israeli security control over the whole territory west of Jordan from the air, sea, and land to prevent terrorists from strengthening in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. It also demands for handpicked Palestinians to manage Gaza, who will not be affiliated with or paid by terrorist-supporting countries or organizations. In other words, Israel will determine who administers Gaza in the future. The strategy admits that Israel has regained control of the Gaza Strip in order to continue the war against the Palestinians and obtain more time to carry it out. However, Prof. Laleh Khalili of the University of Exeter's Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies denounced the concept as a revisionist Zionist fantasy. Israel's right to self-defense and impunity is called into doubt, as using force against non-combatant civilians does not qualify as self-defense. According to Human Rights Watch, the Israeli government has ignored the ICJ verdict and stepped up its repression. Israel has murdered nearly 29,000 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, two-thirds of them are women and children, and has displaced almost 80% of the territory's 2.3 million residents. The US and UK have expressed opposition to the plan, with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken declaring that Israel's construction of settlements in the occupied West Bank violated international law.



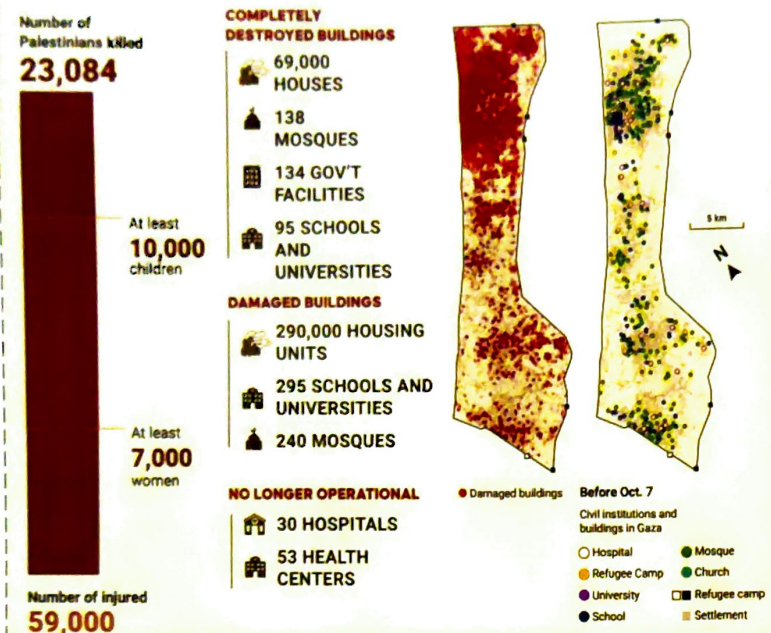
### ➤ **UNSC Resolution on Ceasefire: Betrayal or Moral Compulsion?**

In response to Israel's deadly war in Gaza, the United Nations Security Council adopted a resolution calling for an immediate cease-fire. The United States, which had been the last major obstacle to such a call, decided not to overturn the resolution. This vote surprised Israel, which saw its longtime US partner abstain rather than oppose the motion. Israeli officials slammed the agreement, claiming they have no intention of ending firing. More than 32,000 Palestinians have died in Gaza as a result of Israeli



## 69,000 houses completely destroyed in Gaza

Since Oct. 7, residential areas, public facilities, schools, and hospitals have been targeted in the Gaza Strip



operations begun when HAMAS-led militants assaulted the country on October 7, killing 1,200 and seizing 250 hostages. The document urges "an immediate ceasefire... and also demands the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages. A failed resolution sponsored by the United States last week called for a truce that was directly linked to the release of the prisoners. While the US claims the current resolution is non-binding, experts disagree. They argue that the key is in the document's text. Israel has responded strongly to the resolution, stating that it has no intention of complying with it. The resolution has a moral and general impact on the ground in Gaza.

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has urged an immediate ceasefire between Israel and the Palestinian group HAMAS in the Gaza Strip, as well as the release of all hostages, as the United States abstains from voting. The resolution calls for an

immediate ceasefire during the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, which concludes in two weeks, as well as the release of all hostages detained in the HAMAS-led raid on southern Israel on October 7. The United States has frequently opposed Security Council resolutions putting pressure on Israel, but it has grown increasingly frustrated with its friend as civilian casualties rise and the UN warns of impending hunger in Gaza. The White House stated that the final resolution lacked wording that the US considers critical, and that its abstention does not indicate a shift in policy. According to the office of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the US's failure to veto the resolution is a "clear retreat" from its earlier position and will harm battle efforts against HAMAS as well as efforts to liberate Israeli detainees held in Gaza.

US President Joe Biden had requested a meeting with Israeli officials to discuss Israel's intentions for a ground invasion of Rafah in southern Gaza, where over 1 million displaced Palestinians are sheltering. White House spokesman John Kirby expressed disappointment with Netanyahu's decision and said senior US officials would still meet separately with Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, who is currently in Washington, to discuss issues such as captives, humanitarian aid, and civilian protection in Rafah. The United Nations Security Council has adopted a resolution calling for a cease-fire between Israel and HAMAS, as well as the release of hostages in Gaza. The nearly unanimous resolution comes amid worldwide pleas to stop the conflict, as Israeli forces have evacuated more than 90% of Gaza's 2.3 million population and humanitarian conditions in the beleaguered territory have reached critical levels. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres stated that the resolution "must be implemented" and that failure would be unacceptable. Palestinian leaders praised the resolution's approval, calling it a watershed moment and encouraging UNSC member nations to fulfill their legal obligations by implementing it promptly. The Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs also emphasized the need of stepping up efforts to create a lasting ceasefire that lasts beyond Ramadan, ensure aid entry, work on the release of Palestinian detainees in Israeli jails, and prevent Palestinians from being forced to flee their homes. The latest vote came after Russia and China blocked a US-sponsored resolution on Friday calling for "an immediate and sustained ceasefire."

The United States has denounced the resolution calling for a truce during the holy Muslim fasting month of Ramadan and the release of hostages in Gaza. The resolution, while lacking binding clauses, is regarded international law and should be executed. The United Nations Security Council has the authority to impose sanctions and use armed force to maintain or restore international peace and



security. However, if the resolution is not followed, the council is unlikely to take any action against Israel or HAMAS. Rights groups argue that the United States' position that the resolution is non-binding could lead to future difficulties since it reduces countries' willingness to cooperate. According to Amnesty International Representative Sherine Tadros, the United Nations Charter clearly states that Security Council resolutions are binding, and the United States' position undermines the entire international system.

The other four Security Council veto powers, France, Russia, China, France, and Britain, agree that the decision must be implemented by all, as stated in Article 25 of the Charter. The United Nations General Assembly has punished Russia for breaking the UN Charter by invading Ukraine in February 2022. China's Deputy U.N. Ambassador Geng Shuang stressed that council resolutions are binding, whilst Britain's U.N. Ambassador Barbara Woodward stated that the resolution must be implemented immediately. The Biden administration's emphasis on Israel and its revenue has resulted in a shift in voting patterns, including the war in Gaza and a trend in younger American voters away from Israel. This year, Rashida Tlaib, a Palestinian-American Congresswoman from Michigan, launched the uncommitted campaign, urging Democratic voters to vote uncommitted in the Democratic primary to oppose American policy against Israel. This move has forced Democrats to focus on the mounting backlash to the administration's backing for Israel's genocide.

## TIMELINE OF GAZA BLOCKADE:

How it started, how it's going



The uncommitted campaign had support beyond Muslim voters, including young voters and progressives, whom the Biden administration sorely needs to defeat Donald Trump in the November general election. African American voters who see Gaza and Israeli prejudice as civil rights violations could mean the end for the Democrats and Biden. The US began pressuring Israel for a truce prior to the start of Ramadan, but when this did not occur, their displeasure was evident. The Netanyahu administration stated that it will continue the campaign regardless, causing public displeasure on the American side. Biden focused on getting supplies to Gaza, while Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer requested new elections in Israel during his remarks on the Senate floor.

So far, the Biden administration's outrage has been purely rhetoric, with no policy changes or weaponry shipments halted or reduced. The clamor against Israeli policies is as strong as ever in the United States, and it may take more than words to persuade undecided voters to vote in November. The United Nations Security Council has endorsed a resolution asking for an immediate cease-fire in the Gaza crisis, which has started a war between Israel and Hamas. Riyadh Mansour, the Palestinian representative to the United Nations, hailed the decision, saying it was long overdue following six months of bloodshed and famine. HAMAS, the Palestinian Islamist party that rules Gaza, also hailed the resolution, adding that it is prepared to begin an immediate prisoner swap process. The United States abstained from the Security Council vote, while the other 14 members voted in favor. The US had previously rejected resolutions calling for a ceasefire, but this time it presented its own proposal, which called for a ceasefire for the first time. The resolution recognizes the current negotiations between Israel and HAMAS, and UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres calls for the prompt and unconditional release of all hostages. The



**Israel-Palestine escalation****Blockade of the Gaza Strip**

The Gaza Strip has been under an **Israeli sea and air blockade since 2007**. Since 2008, Israel has waged four wars on the Palestinian territory, killing thousands of people, mostly civilians.



United States has become increasingly critical of Israel for the mounting death toll in Gaza, urging Israel to do more to get relief to the region.

The US stance toward Israel is a major issue, with the US sitting on the sidelines in defiance of international public opinion as 30,000 civilians are slaughtered in Gaza. The United States' military and financial help have formed the foundation of Israel's national power, insulating it from retribution for its wrongs. The United States' unwavering political support, particularly its deliberate advocacy at the United Nations, has insulated Israel from punishment for its wrongs, resulting in more violations and more US support. The US's unwavering support is not just due to the efforts of the Israel lobby (AIPAC), but is ingrained in America's political system, where its influence is

pervasive and deep-rooted. High-profile Israel supporters in the think tank, media, and financial sectors have inflated Israel's significance as an ally and its vulnerability in the area. Policy and politics have combined to increase American backing for Israel while reducing Washington's leverage, exacerbating Israel's intransigence. The Gaza crisis has made no difference to the US attitude, with Joe Biden, often regarded as the most pro-Israel president in history, choosing a cautious approach and failing to put enough pressure on Israel. Both the United States and Israel are mired in ethically bankrupt policies that contradict their respective national interests. The Palestinian future is dependent on policy changes in the United States and Israel, and these changes will occur in a changed America and Israel.

### ➤ **Guilty - ICJ Still Failing in Preventing Israel from Committing Genocide**

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) has been chastised for failing to prevent Israel from committing genocide and providing relief to Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. South Africa condemned Israel's activities, accusing it of violating Article I of the Genocide Convention and Articles II and III by committing genocide. The court agreed with South Africa's viewpoint, despite Israeli experts claiming that the case was "flimsy." The court witnessed catastrophic amounts of deaths and destruction, including 25,700 Palestinians dead, 63,000 injured, 360,000 homes demolished, and 1.7 million people forced to flee their homes. Almost 93% of Gaza's population is extremely hungry. The court agreed that there was a plan to kill Palestinians because they are a protected group under Article II of the Genocide Convention. On January 26, 2024, the court issued six provisional measures to address the critical humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip. These measures pushed Israel and its military to stop murdering and injuring civilians, both physically and mentally. However, Israel was unable to persuade the court that it was not violating the Genocide Convention and was just protecting itself from the HAMAS attack on October 7. The rising death toll, combined with Israel's other intention to attack Rafah, makes it difficult to accept that Israel intends to kill and relocate thousands of Palestinians. South Africa is the only country under Article 1 of the Genocide Convention that feels responsible to prevent genocide. The Convention requires all member states to protect and prevent genocide by halting the trade in arms or military aid to Israel and prohibiting war politics. The United States is under increased moral and political pressure to do what is necessary to end the conflict.

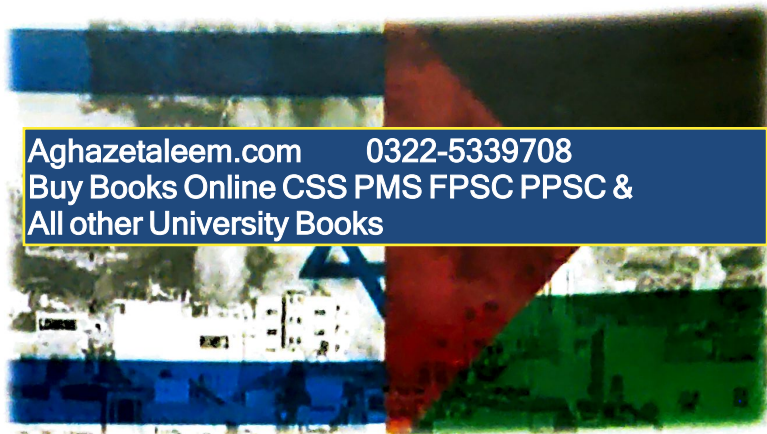
### ➤ **Navigating Ceasefire Realities in the Israel-Palestine Conflict**

The UN Security Council has adopted Resolution 2728/2024, which confines the ceasefire to Ramadan, which is expected to finish around April 10. This resolution is a watershed moment in international law



and diplomacy, as it intersects with Israel's pogrom against Palestine. However, it is vital to emphasize that neither the resolution nor the International Court of Justice's provisional decisions provide a remedy to the continuous massacre of Palestinian people. The resolution was adopted under the UNSC's general powers, which are regulated by the goals and values of the United Nations Charter, rather than Chapter VII. The ICJ's advisory judgment on South West Africa states that Article 25 of the UN Charter applies to Security Council decisions made in line with the Charter. If Article 25 just referred to Security Council decisions about enforcement action under Articles 41 and 42 of the Charter, it would be redundant, as this impact is guaranteed by Articles 48 and 49 of the Charter. In a news conference following the resolution's approval, E10 representatives confirmed that all Security Council resolutions are binding and that every Member State is required to implement them. However, an examination of the resolution's language contradicts this viewpoint. The UN Security Council cannot 'decide' on a ceasefire or the resumption of hostilities; instead, UNSC resolutions adopt text to carry out the desired outcome. Understanding the text of Resolution 2728 demonstrates that it can only be realistically read as imposing enforceable legal responsibilities on the parties to the conflict. If Israel continues to conduct its campaign against Palestine in clear violation of the ICJ's temporary orders and Resolution 2728, the General Assembly may suspend or expel it from the UN. While such suspension or expulsion is subject to a "recommendation of the Security Council," it represents additional diplomatic and political isolation for Israel and its supporters in the future.

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### ➤ **Geostrategic Turmoil: Navigating Israel's Invasion & Regional Ramifications**

Israel's invasion on Gaza has murdered thousands of innocent Palestinians while disturbing geostrategic continuity. The battle has evolved into a regional event involving numerous countries, spanning land, air, cyberspace, and outer space. The consequences of this battle go beyond geographical bounds, affecting the Red Sea and the broader Indian Ocean Region (IOR). The Houthis in Yemen, which are part of Iran's sphere of influence, have triggered a flashpoint in the Bab el Mandeb Strait to demonstrate their defiance, adding three more American theater commands to the list of security risks. They intend to increase the cost of war, make way for US forces in Iraq, and demonstrate to the Palestinians that Iran's power is a viable choice when Arab countries fail or refuse to care.

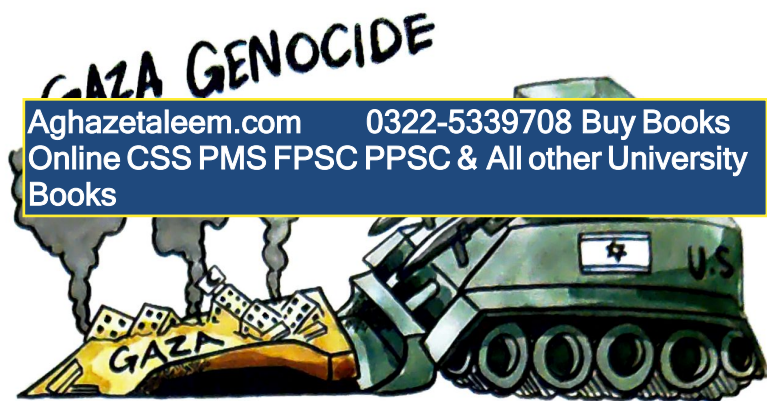
The Red Sea/Bab el Mandeb Strait area is critical for communication between Europe and Asia, with over 99% of all internet and financial traffic passing through subsea cables along this route. Analysts believe that the Houthis will find it difficult to damage these lines underwater, similar to what happened with Nord Stream-2 in Europe. Pakistan has shown moral and diplomatic support for Palestinians in Gaza, as well as backing South Africa's appeal before the International Court of Justice. However, what the Houthis do in the Red Sea will have a significant impact on Pakistan, causing national inflation and serious economic problems for any newly elected federal administration.

Only Bahrain has backed the United States' theater-led naval response to Houthi assault among Arab Gulf states. If Saudi Arabia and the UAE are unable to find an other solution, Pakistan may become engaged in the scenario. The deployment of American-led military force against assailants on the high seas should raise concerns that governments seeking to halt commercial container movement from Pakistan via the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) may eventually do so. Pakistan's authorities may try to sleep on the Red Sea issue, hoping that China will resolve it. However, the issue cannot be overlooked in real life, as Pakistan is a USCENTCOM partner and has a threat profile with Israel. According to a Pakistani military officer, the United States should reconsider its current strategy of forcefully backing Israel while alienating its regional partners in order to aid Chinese diplomatic efforts. Pakistan wants big countries in the region to collaborate with countries outside the region, such as the United States, to find a solution while staying out of it. Pakistan is in a delicate place because the



opponent, the Houthis, is linked to Iran. It is aware that China has developed alternatives to CPEC, including the Five Nations Railway Corridor (China-Iran-Afghanistan-Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan), the China-Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran Corridor, and the Middle Corridor project, which links the Belt and Road Initiative to it. Finally, Pakistan believes that Israeli attacks would come to an end soon. If Saudi Arabia or the UAE join the US-led anti-Houthi coalition,

Pakistan will struggle to remain impartial because it relies on them for monthly funding. To address long-term maritime risks, Pakistan may increase overland rail and truck trade through Afghanistan. The question of security support for Arab donors has not been resolved, and Pakistan's relationship with the United States will deteriorate further after passively supporting anti-Houthi actions.



### ➤ **The Fiery Act of Compassion: Aaron Bushnell's Sacrifice for Palestine**

Aaron Bushnell, a seasoned US Air Force cyber defense expert, set himself on fire outside the Israeli Embassy in Washington, D.C., yelling "Free Palestine." His audacious deed resonated throughout the world, startling everyone who witnessed it—except, perhaps, the very entity he wished to confront. In the midst of persistent Israeli aggression over Palestinian areas, Bushnell's self-immolation is a poignant tribute to the sorrow and desperation felt by people who stand in solidarity with the oppressed. Israel's relentless onslaught, which includes air attacks, military incursions, and naval bombardments, has claimed over 30,000 lives and displaced more than 80% of Gaza's population. However, Bushnell's act of self-sacrifice is not an unusual instance. It has the haunting resonance of past protests that arose out of despair and defiance. Another individual set fire to himself in front of the Israeli Consulate in Atlanta in December 2023, a visceral display of strong political opposition indicated by the presence of a Palestinian flag on the scene. The sad end of Bushnell's protest demonstrates the extraordinary lengths people will go to highlight the condition of the downtrodden. While self-immolation is an uncommon form of political protest, historical examples, such as the self-immolation of Buddhist monks during the Vietnam War, demonstrate its power as a visceral act of resistance against injustice. Aaron Bushnell's legacy is one of compassion and understanding, a ray of hope among the shadow of conflict. His decision to leave his savings to the Palestine Children's Relief Fund in his will is a moving reminder of the enduring power of solidarity and the unwavering spirit of individuals who dare to resist oppression.

### ➤ **Unraveling Fabric of Truth: Navigating Postmodern Manipulation in Politics**

The threads of truth and deception frequently mingle in the rich fabric of global politics, creating a narrative that blurs the distinction between reality and organized fiction. Postmodernism, with its emphasis on the "hegemony of consent," has proven to be an effective instrument for manipulating public opinion, as evidenced by the current conflict in Gaza. The ruling class has power here, molding perceptions through cultural and social frameworks that serve their interests. However, postmodernism is a two-edged sword, providing both emancipation and hazard. While it encourages critical thinking, it also promotes a relativistic perspective of truth that is easily manipulated to serve vested interests. In Gaza, the Israeli government's narrative has normalized violence, concealing the terrible deaths of innocent children behind a cloak of permission. The power of agreement, especially among the young, maintains the cycle of harm while protecting governments from accountability. In the age of social media, when information flows freely and unregulated, separating fact from propaganda is critical. State-controlled media and educational institutions wield power, shaping narratives to promote their interests. This toxic combination of state instruction and postmodern ideology creates an environment in which violence is not just tolerated but encouraged. However, there is optimism within the chaos of deception. We may begin to demolish the deception machinery by rejecting state-sponsored narratives and using discernment when consuming information. A global conversation founded on sensitivity, justice, and shared humanity provides a way forward—a beacon guiding us to a future where truth reigns supreme and compassion trumps political expediency.



## Regional Potential vs. Extra-regional Chains

# Bridging Borders: President Raisi's Visit & Iran-Pakistan Relations

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Iranian President Dr. Ebrahim Raisi's recent visit to Pakistan holds utmost significance in fostering mutual cooperation between the two brotherly countries, given the deep historical and cultural ties between them. Increasing closeness between both nations is the need of the hour. Both countries share strong religious bonds. Furthermore, affiliation with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has played a significant role in bringing both countries closer economically. The visit of the Iranian President during the tenure of the present government could be termed extraordinary. His arrival in Islamabad was warmly welcomed, resonating with chants of Pak-Iran friendship, which stirred the atmosphere with enthusiasm. The public's excitement was palpable, especially upon his arrival in Lahore, where citizens were overjoyed. The lively streets of Lahore became vibrant with excitement. He paid homage at the mausoleum of Allama Iqbal and laid a floral wreath. The Iranian President also held a meeting with the Chief Minister of Punjab. The three-day official visit of the Iranian President has been successful in every aspect. Besides meetings with the Prime Minister and President of Pakistan, he also met with the Chief of Army Staff, during which important mutual interests were discussed. President Raisi also visited Karachi, the industrial and business hub of the country, where he engaged in discussions with Pakistan's industrial and business personalities. The government of Sindh arranged a grand reception in honor of the Iranian President, highlighting his prestigious visit.

## ➤ Visit Amid Rising Tensions in the Middle East

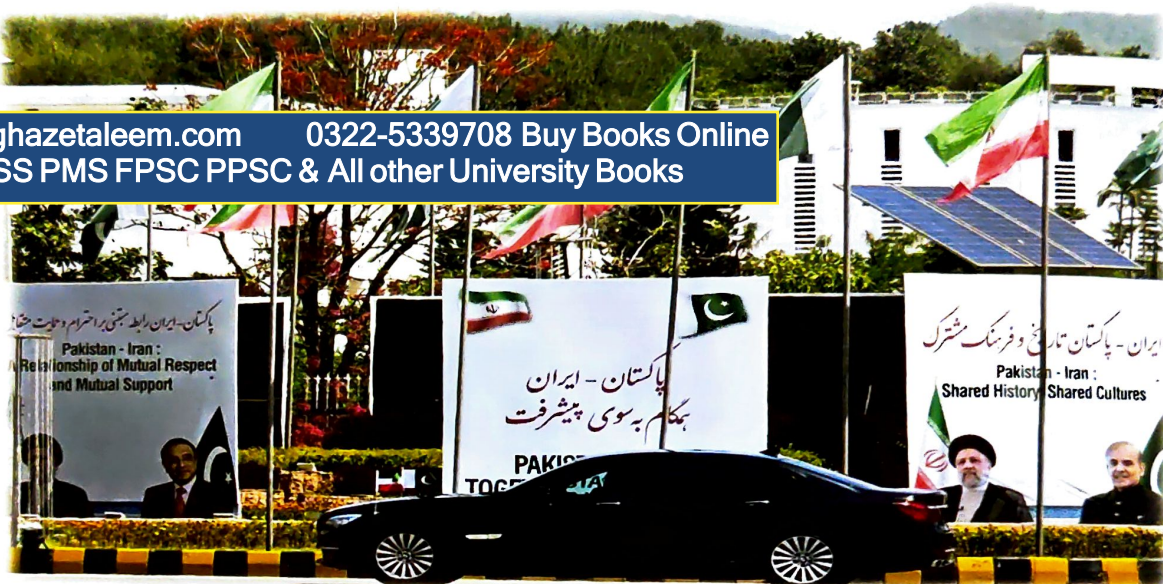
The Iranian President's visit comes at a sensitive time when Palestinians are facing oppression from Israel and tensions in the Middle East are at their peak. Last year, on October 7th, after the attack by Hamas, Israel targeted Palestinians in Gaza ruthlessly. The attack by Hamas on Israel is termed by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, his cabinet, and military commanders as an attack orchestrated by Iran. Israel has been accusing Iran for some time of targeting its assets through its proxies. Hezbollah in Lebanon is labelled as Iran's proxy. Iranian leaders present in Syria are being blamed for Israeli attacks. Israel has threatened several times to strike Iran's nuclear installations. However, both sides have refrained from direct attacks on each other. After the attack on the Iranian



consulate in Damascus and the subsequent killing of two senior Iranian generals, Iran retaliated with a drone strike on Israel, causing significant damage. Israel recently targeted an Iranian military facility in Isfahan, which is close to Iran's nuclear installations. Both sides are threatening each other with attacks. In such times, the visit of the Iranian president to Pakistan has given the impression that Iran and Pakistan share a strong stance on Palestine. President Ebrahim Raisi, in a joint press conference with Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, reiterated Pakistan's position on Palestine and said that Pakistan has adopted a firm stance for the rights of Palestinians.

### ➤ Pakistan-Iran Trade Relations Amid Political and Economic Pressures

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Iran and Pakistan have signed memoranda to enhance trade and aim to increase it to ten billion dollars. Discussions have also taken place during President Raisi's visit regarding the Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline project, which the United States strongly opposes. Pakistan is facing an energy crisis. Pakistan's effort is to complete the gas pipeline project and obtain gas at cheaper rates. However, due to American opposition, this project has been stalled for some time. It seems that Pakistan, at a time when it has been restricted by America's ban on acquiring long-range missile technology, will refrain from further displeasing the United States. The gas pipeline project may remain stalled for some time. The latest information is that America has threatened trade agreements with Iran. Pakistan also needs a package of six to eight billion dollars from the IMF. A billion dollars are also required for the Diamer Bhasha Dam from the World Bank. Funds are also required from the World Bank for several other development programs. Without American support, it will be difficult for Pakistan to overcome the current financial crisis. Pakistan is trapped by these compulsions. However, Pakistan and Iran should move forward by increasing trade and cooperation in several other sectors.

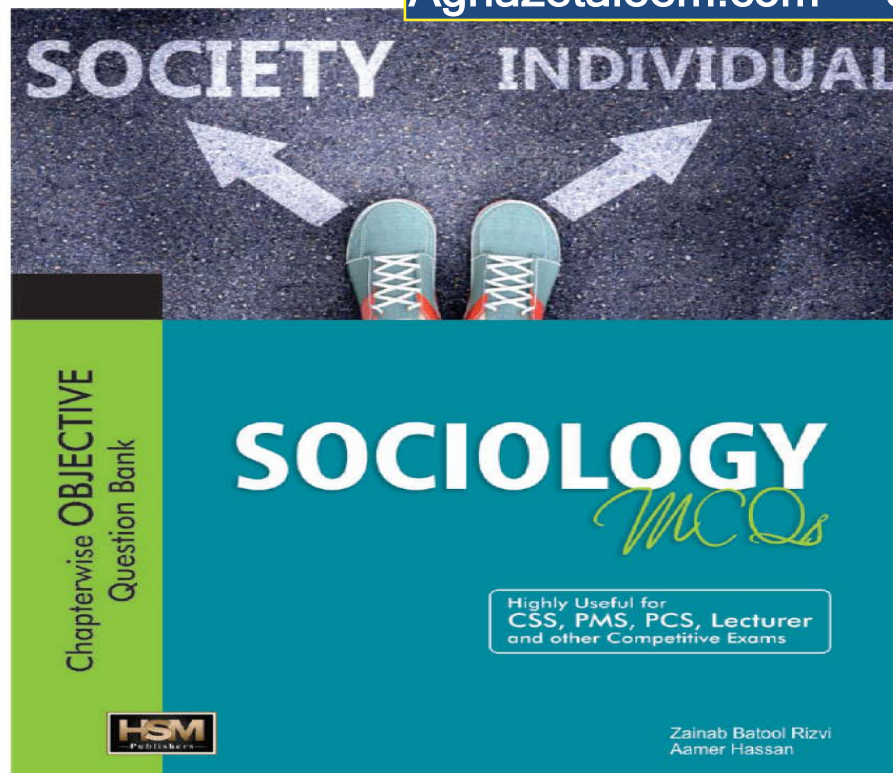
### ➤ Iran-Saudi Arabia Reconciliation: Opportunities & Challenges

Tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia have ended. China has restored diplomatic relations with both countries. Otherwise, Pakistan also had reservations about Iran in the past regarding Saudi Arabia. There is great potential to increase trade between Pakistan and Iran to at least five billion dollars annually. Iran and Pakistan continue to accuse each other of using each other's territory for terrorism. A few months ago, allegations were made by both sides to target terrorist hideouts inside each other's territory due to Iranian attacks and Pakistan's retaliatory attacks on Iran. Discussions have also been had during the Iranian president's visit on this issue. Both countries have agreed to impose restrictions on those terrorist organizations that are involved in terrorism in each other's territory.

### ➤ Pakistan's Economic Dilemma: National Interests Amidst Constraints

Pakistan is forced to be stuck in an economic and financial crisis that has tied its hands. It is incapable of making decisions in the field of foreign policy for national interests. It is always feared that if America and Western countries become dissatisfied, they will face more difficulties. Otherwise, Pakistan can





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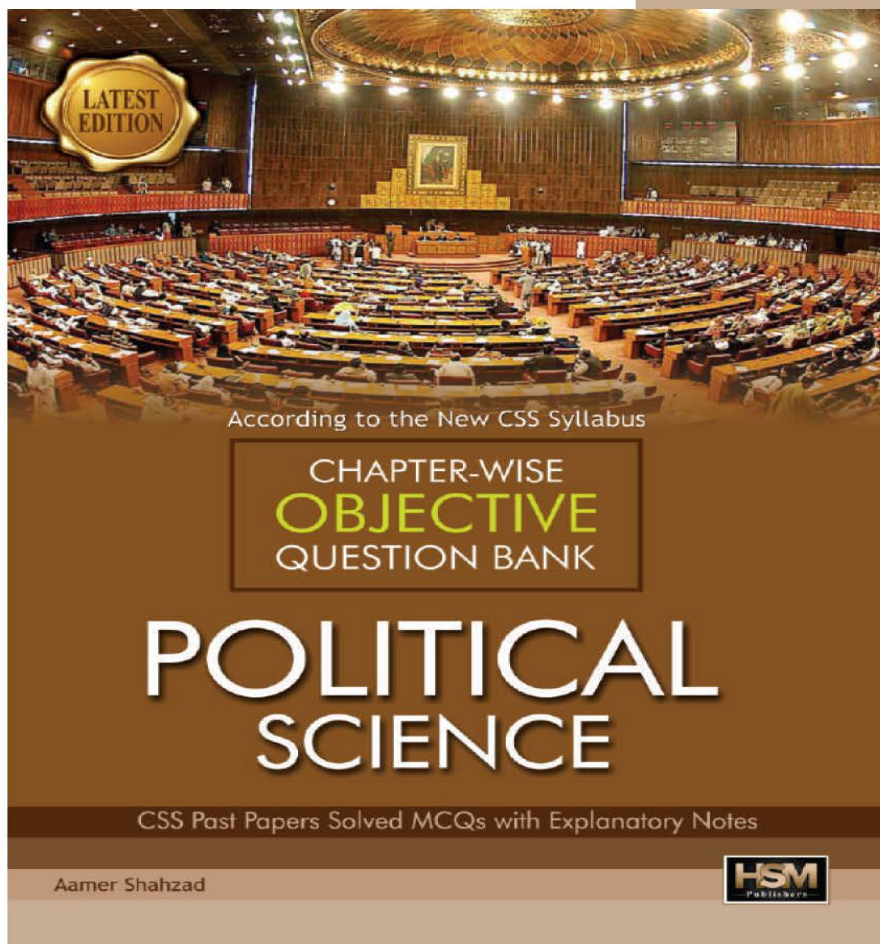
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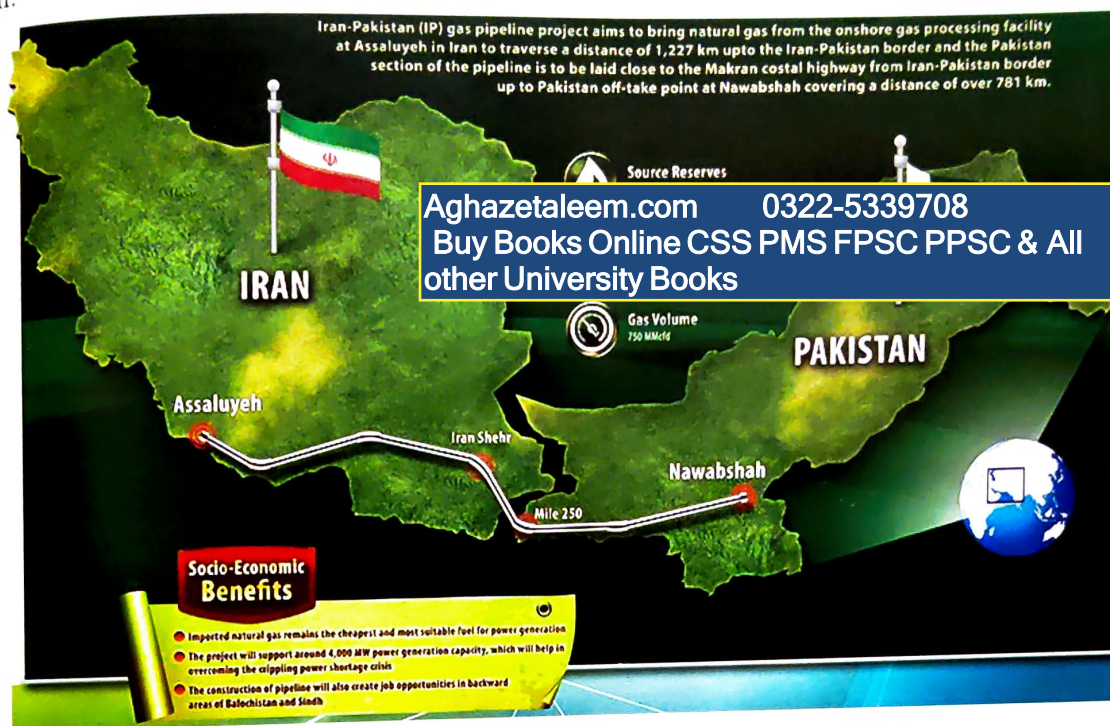
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benefit from Iran's energy acquisition at cheaper prices by openly deciding in the field of foreign policy. This can provide gas to its industry at suitable prices, which is essential to increasing national revenue. However, Pakistan is bound by America and Western dictations. Unlike Pakistan, India imports oil from Iran. America has not imposed any restrictions on it. Pakistan's weak economy and weak leadership do not have the capability to become a free, independent state. America has also imposed restrictions on Pakistan's long-range missile program. These restrictions are imposed with the foresight of the danger that Pakistan's capabilities might be used against Israel. America is also worried that Pakistan can share this technology with Iran. America also alleges that Pakistan has cooperated with Iran in its nuclear program.



## ➤ America's Response to the Iranian President's Visit to Pakistan

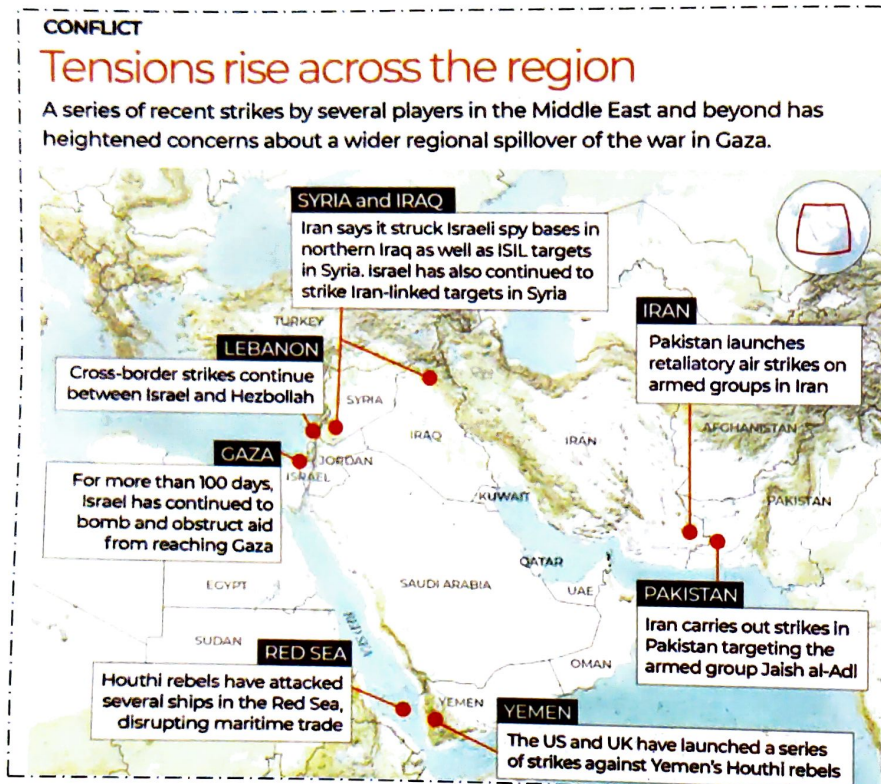
America has reacted to Iranian President Ibrahim Raisi's visit to Pakistan by contacting Washington at the diplomatic level to convince it of Pakistan's independent needs, while also emphasizing the depth and breadth of Pakistan-Iran relations and the historical perspective. When various restrictions were imposed on Iran by America and international institutions regarding Tehran's nuclear program, it was Pakistan that became the medium for diplomatic messages between the two countries. According to reports, Washington, in response to Pakistan-Iran trade agreements, has advised Pakistan to be aware of the possible risks of sanctions. According to the US State Department, Washington is one of Pakistan's largest export markets, and for 20 years, Washington has been a major investor in Pakistan. This reaction from Washington has come just three days after an action on April 20, 2024, where restrictions were imposed on four companies for their alleged cooperation and provision of equipment for Pakistan's ballistic missile program. Among these are three Chinese companies and one from Belarus. According to the US State Department, these companies have allegedly provided Pakistan with equipment and assistant materials used in the preparation of ballistic missiles, including long-range missiles. Previously, in October 2023, restrictions were imposed on three Chinese companies for their alleged involvement in providing parts and equipment for Pakistan's ballistic missile program. Pakistan has rejected the political use of export control policies and stated that such restrictions have been imposed in the past without any evidence, while many favored countries have been exempted from providing significant technology. Pakistan's Foreign Office position should acknowledge that the exchange of ideas between relevant parties is necessary to ensure access to technology for social and economic development. When it comes to trade agreements with neighboring Iran, a country with a rich historical and cultural heritage, illegal trade and crime increase if legal routes of trade between neighboring countries are not available. Islamabad faces several issues, including terrorism, and its endeavor is to establish friendly relations with neighbors, including India and Afghanistan.



## ➤ Status of the Pakistan-Iran Gas Pipeline Project

Pakistan faces the challenge of energy scarcity, and in view of this, the Pakistan-Iran Gas Pipeline Project began in March 2013. Iran has completed its work on the 900-kilometer-long line on its side, but so far, this pipeline has only reached Nawabshah in Pakistan. If this pipeline is not completed within the specified period, Pakistan will face significant penalties under the contract. Principally, there should be no objection to fulfilling Pakistan's trade or energy needs from Iran. The current government should not only engage with the United States at the highest political and diplomatic levels but also repeatedly convey to the White House through friendly countries that projects like the Iran-Pakistan Gas Pipeline are of special importance for Pakistan's economy. America should take Pakistan's difficulties into account and assist Pakistan in meeting its energy needs, including increasing trade at the regional level.

## ➤ Iranian President's Visit to Pakistan and Complex Regional Dynamics



The Iranian President's Visit to Pakistan and Current Issues In the context of global changes, the Palestine-Israel conflict, the volatile situation in the Middle East, and the evolving conditions in South Asia, Iranian President Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi's visit to Pakistan undoubtedly holds extraordinary importance. Let's analyze the implications and potential consequences of this visit. Since the issues are complex and interconnected, let's first briefly review the current events so that we can have a clear picture of what we intend to discuss. The Israel-Palestine war is in its seventh month, and the number of Palestinian Muslim martyrs in Gaza has exceeded 34,000. Many more are wounded. While the United States and Western countries continue to fully support Israel in this war,

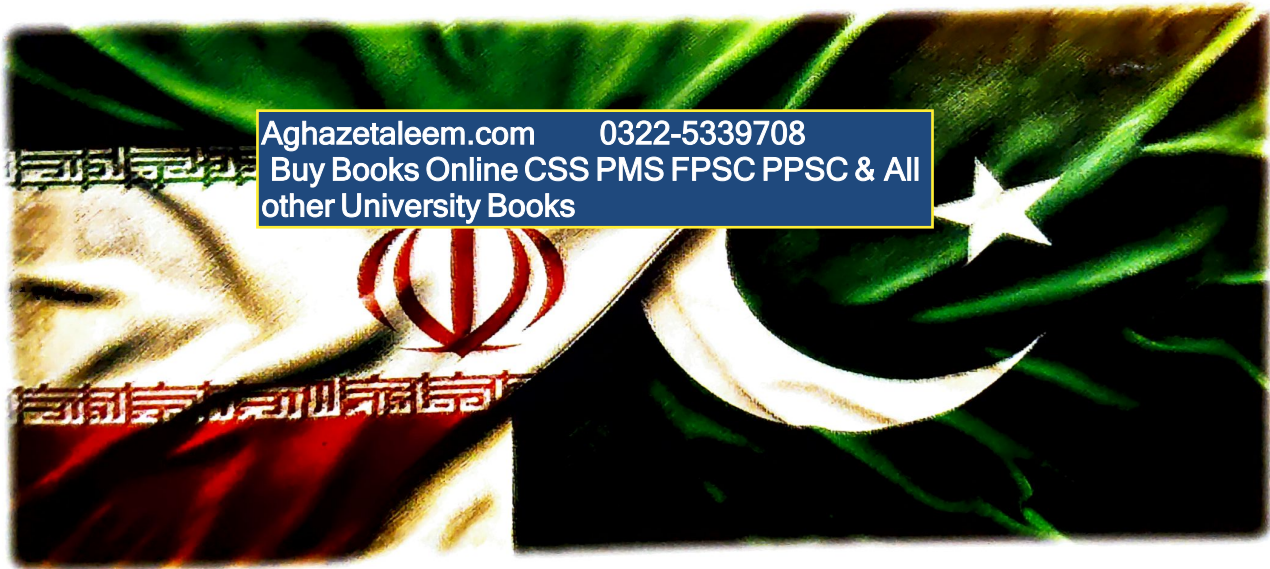
Palestinians have not received the global support they expected; therefore, their situation is extremely dire. Meanwhile, on April 1st, Israel launched an aerial attack on the Iranian embassy in Damascus, Iranian embassy? Does this attack relate to the ongoing conflict between Hamas and Israel? According to Israeli intelligence, the building attacked in Damascus was not a consulate or embassy but a civilian Quds Brigade is assisting in attacks. Nevertheless, this is Israel's position, not Iran's. In response to the Israeli attack, Iran launched missiles at Israel, most of which were intercepted. A few days later, Israel carried out drone strikes on an Iranian city, which Iran prevented. In response to this tense situation, the White House announced new sanctions on Iran's missile and drone programs. The White House also expressed hope that America's allies and partners would take similar measures. The world's attention was focused on the Iranian president's visit to Pakistan. The conclusions drawn from these perspectives will become apparent from the statements made in the next day or two. But a big question arises: Will the agreements and understandings reached between Pakistan and Iran during this visit be implemented? This question is pertinent because the United States has been opposing and continues to oppose the Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline project. Now, America's reaction to the Iranian President's visit to Pakistan has also been revealed. The U.S. State Department spokesman said that the United States is Pakistan's largest export market and one of its major investors. There is a risk of sanctions on trade agreements with Iran, and those considering trade agreements should be aware of the risks.



In the context of rapidly changing global situations, the visits of the Saudi Foreign Minister to Pakistan and, immediately after that, the Iranian President's meeting with Pakistani leaders indicate that some changes are taking place at the regional level, which can be seen positively and in terms of the future. One of these changes is that the countries in the region are feeling closer to each other. First and foremost, the facilitation by China has reduced tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia, and both countries have started a series of exchanges. The result of these improved relations is that, after almost a decade, the first group of Iranian pilgrims left for the holy sites of Hijaz. Remember that there are 11 scheduled flights to bring Iranian pilgrims to Saudi Arabia. After that, news of a reduction in tensions between Iran and Iraq emerged. Relations between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan are already good. Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif's visit to Saudi Arabia in the first week of the past month was followed by a visit by Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister, accompanied by Iranian leaders, to Pakistan. This indicates that harmony is increasing among the countries of the region, and relations between them are strengthening and stabilizing.

### ➤ **Pakistan and Afghanistan Trade Dynamics: Prospects and Challenges**

At the end of last month, it was reported that talks had begun in Kabul between Pakistan and Afghanistan to discuss transit trade agreements and promote trade activities. Several agreements have been reached in this regard. On the other hand, Pakistan's business community is looking forward to improving trade relations with India. According to them, bilateral trade is in the interest of both countries. Thus, the effects of countries coming closer to each other in the region are emerging, which will benefit both the individual and the collective levels of society. However, the question remains whether this ongoing process of promotion will lead to any positive outcomes or not. And the reason for this question is whether the powers that be, who do not favor the strengthening of relations between Pakistan and Iran, will tolerate the strengthening of stability in the Middle East and South Asia.



### ➤ **American Warnings and Regional Cooperation**

It wouldn't be said that we should ignore American warnings and just move forward, but it's necessary and possible to find a middle ground. Those advocating for sanctions by certain powers should be asked: If not Iran, then what is the alternative? If regional countries do not agree on regional harmony, what is the solution to economic setbacks? The destiny of the nations of this region should not be just deprivation and poverty. Can there ever be an interpretation of those dreams whose purpose is to economically strengthen and stabilize the countries and their people in this region? This is a very big question that all the countries in this region must consider together. The implementation of agreed-upon treaties should not pose a problem for maintaining better relations with Iran.

### ➤ **Pakistan-Iran Relations: Expanding Trade Horizons**

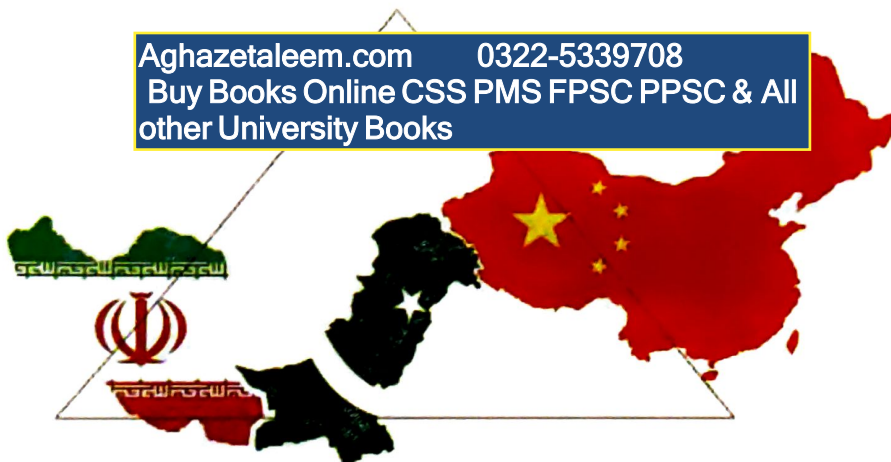
At present, both countries have expressed their determination to expand this trade volume to up to ten billion dollars. Along this lengthy border strip, there are numerous locations where thousands of liters



of smuggled gasoline are brought into Pakistan daily. By laying gas pipelines between both countries over a long period of time, Iran has completed the task of supplying gas. Now, Pakistan faces the sword of penalties. To avoid this, it should complete the pending work immediately. Pakistan can obtain gas from Iran at cheaper rates by completing the gas pipeline project. It is necessary to establish commercial centers at important locations on the Pakistan-Iran border to enhance mutual relations and trade relations between both countries. Due to CPEC, the benefit of such trade points can be doubled. Moreover, being neighboring countries, we can save billions of rupees in transportation expenses by obtaining Iranian oil and gas and expending it through the other parts of Pakistan. If the RCD Highway project is revived, annual trade worth billions of dollars can be facilitated through road and rail. This could mark the beginning of a new era of progress and prosperity in the region. China also desires to extend CPEC to Afghanistan, Iran, and Turkey, which could open the doors to industrial and commercial activities in Pakistan. Although there are many obstacles to doing all this, including conflicts between America and Iran, which could affect Pakistan-Iran trade relations, America, along with its allied countries, is maneuvering against Russia and China. America, while keeping a close eye on Pakistan-Iran relations, will find it difficult to take arbitrary actions due to the friendship and harmony between Russia and China.

### ➤ **Fostering Regional Prosperity: Leveraging Relations for Economic Growth**

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## **China-Pakistan-Iran A Triangle of Cooperation**

At present, Russia, China, and Iran are the countries in the region that, despite American pressure, are formulating their own policies. Both sides of the Pakistan-Iran border are inhabited by Baloch tribes, which have been connected by mutual relations for centuries. In Pakistan, this area is called Balochistan, and in Iran, it is called Sistan. If, in addition to Taftan, border markets are established at other entry points such as Rigg, Koh-e-Malik Siah, and the coastal area of Gwadar, which are closer to the Iranian maritime border than Gwadar, smuggling can be controlled, and legal trade worth billions of dollars can be made possible.

This worries our enemies, and they are using terrorists to disrupt the situation. The borders between Afghanistan and Pakistan are not yet secure. In this backdrop, Iran is such a country that provides us with a great deal of strategic depth. Now that Pakistan has decided to revisit its foreign policy, it is necessary to take action on Iranian matters, keeping in mind the greater national interest, because in foreign relations, neither an enemy nor a friend gains permanent status. In these relations, only the national interest holds permanent value. We also have to remember that we want to make Gwadar and the associated areas of Pakistan the focal point of Pakistan's economic hub in the future. For this, we need Iran's cooperation and a secure border. Iran also wants the development of Sistan-Balochistan and Pakistan's Balochistan. This point is not only about adhering to the principles of mutual diplomacy but also about the long-term economic development and prosperity of both countries. Gwadar will become Pakistan's focal point, which will benefit Pakistan and especially Balochistan. The current government has decided to start One Window Operation for foreign investors. Our biggest problem is that there has been no increase in our exports in the past, and attention has not been paid to increasing exports. When exports do not increase, pressure on the rupee increases, leading to problems in the current account deficit. For this, it is necessary to attract investors to special economic zones and locations like the North Free Zones for investment so that the country's revenue increases and microeconomic imbalances are eliminated. Many Iranian products are cheaper than Pakistani products. Pakistan benefits in every way from the Pakistan-Iran trade. Cheap oil and gas from Iran will reduce inflation in Pakistan.

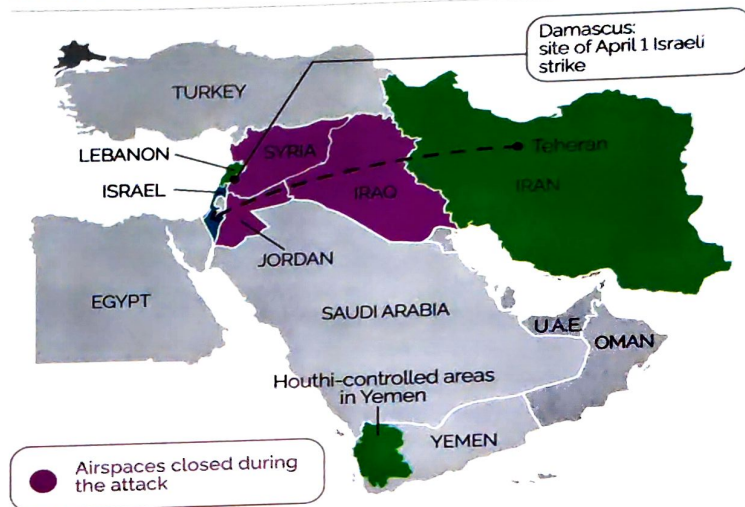


## A Story of Confusions, Slip-Ups & Rhetoric

# Demystifying Iran-Israel Conflict: Chronological Analysis of the Rivalry

Iran and Israel's relationship can be delineated into four distinct phases. Initially marked by ambivalence from 1947 to 1953, it transitioned into a friendly period during the reign of the Pahlavi dynasty from 1953 to 1979. Following the Iranian Revolution in 1979, relations deteriorated sharply until 1990. Since the conclusion of the Gulf War in 1991, a period of overt hostility has persisted. In 1947, Iran joined 12 other nations in opposing the United Nations Partition Plan for the British Mandate of Palestine. Subsequently, Iran voted against Israel's admission to the United Nations in 1949. Notably, Iran was the second Muslim-majority nation, after Turkey, to recognize Israel's sovereignty. The pivotal moment came with the 1953 coup d'état, which restored Mohammad Reza Pahlavi as Iran's pro-Western leader, catalysing a significant improvement in bilateral relations.

## Iran-Israel Confrontation



However, the landscape shifted dramatically after the Islamic Revolution, leading Iran to sever all diplomatic and commercial ties with Israel. The early 1990s marked a turning point, characterized by escalating tensions fuelled by geopolitical shifts and inflammatory rhetoric. Factors contributing to this escalation include Iran's nuclear ambitions, support for Islamist groups, and alleged involvement in terrorist activities, countered by Israel's backing of militant factions and covert operations within Iran. The Iran-Israel proxy conflict, ongoing since 1985, has profoundly shaped Middle Eastern geopolitics. Direct military confrontations, support for opposing factions in regional conflicts, cyber-attacks, and sabotage have all been tactics employed, underscoring the complexity and enduring nature of this conflict.

### ➤ Iran-Israel Conflict and Lebanon

In 1982, Iran's Revolutionary Guards founded Hezbollah to combat Israeli forces following their invasion of Lebanon that year. Widely regarded as a significant political force, Hezbollah holds sway surpassing that of the Lebanese government. Since early October last year, there has been a significant escalation in hostilities — the most severe since the full-scale conflict in 2006 — between Hezbollah and Israeli forces along the Lebanese Israeli border. Hezbollah claims its objective is to stretch thin the Israeli military. According to Israeli security sources, since October 7, 2023, Israel has eliminated approximately 240 Hezbollah fighters, including high-ranking commanders, within Lebanon, with an additional 30 casualties resulting from Israeli strikes in Syria.

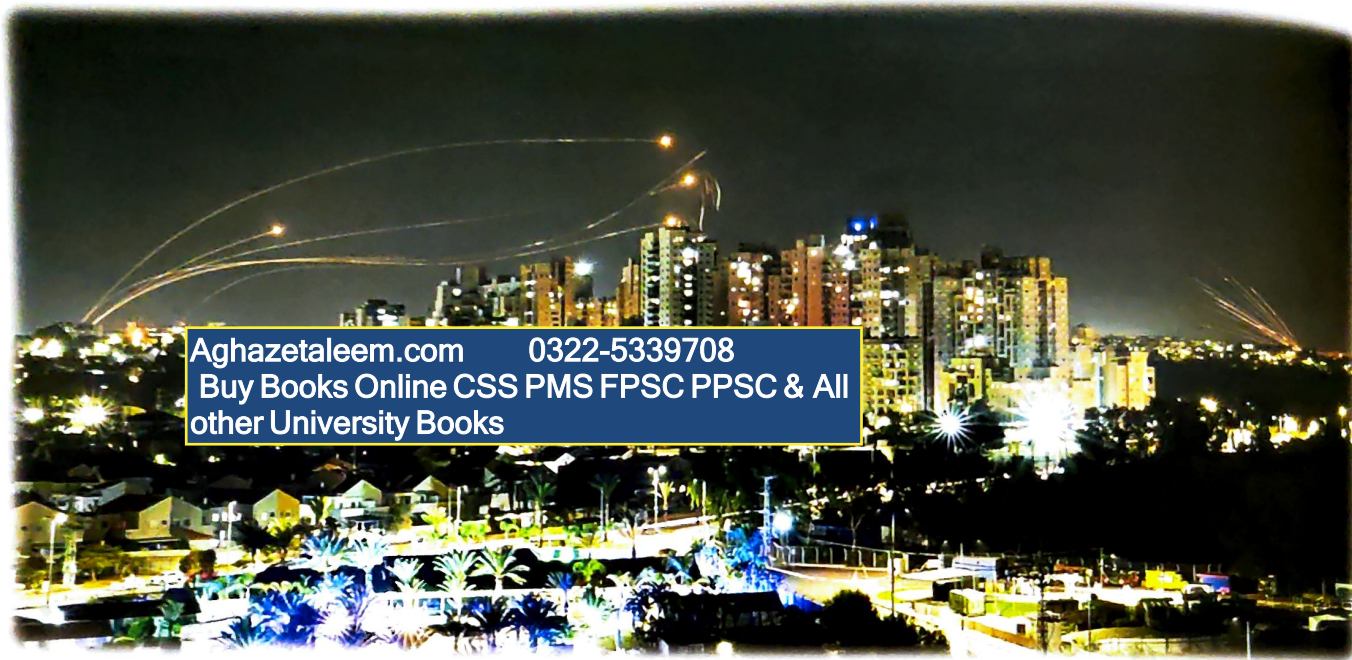
### ➤ Iran-Israel Conflict and the Syrian Civil War

Amidst the backdrop of the Syrian civil war, the Iran-Israel conflict unfolds as a tense standoff playing out within and around Syrian borders. Beginning with Iran's increased involvement in Syria from 2011 onwards, what initially manifested as a proxy war gradually escalated into direct confrontation by early 2018. Over the span of several years, between 2013 and 2017, Israel reportedly conducted or supported attacks targeting Hezbollah and Iranian entities within Syrian territory or Lebanon. Notable among these

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incidents was the reported airstrike on a Syrian convoy transporting Iranian weapons to Hezbollah on January 30, 2013. Israel maintained a consistent policy of non-commentary on such actions, purportedly to preempt Syrian retaliation.



While some reports of Israeli Air Force incidents were confirmed by Syria in May 2013, December 2014, and April 2015, others were denied. Israel refrained from addressing alleged strikes on Hezbollah and Syrian Ba'athist targets within Syrian borders. Retaliation ensued in 2015 when suspected Hezbollah militants attacked Israeli forces in Shebaa farms. In March 2017, Syria launched anti-aircraft missiles towards Israeli-controlled parts of the Golan Heights, claiming to target Israeli aircraft heading for Palmyra, Syria. In December 2017, the Israeli Air Force acknowledged over 100 attacks in Syria over six years, all aimed at arms convoys of Hezbollah and the Ba'athists. The intensity heightened as the Israeli Air Force disclosed conducting over 200 airstrikes on Iranian targets in 2017–2018 alone by September 2018. Following the outbreak of the Israel– Hamas war in 2023 and 2024, Israeli strikes in Syria surged in both frequency and intensity. Reports suggested Israel ceased providing advanced warnings, adopting a "bombing to kill" approach.

### ➤ Iran-Israel Proxy and Yemen

When the civil conflict broke out in late 2014, the Houthi movement grabbed control of much of Yemen, including Sanaa. Saudi Arabia, the region's dominant Sunni Muslim state, was concerned about Shia Iran's growing influence along its border and participated in the conflict in March 2015 to protect the deposed, Saudi-backed administration. In September, Saudi Arabia welcomed Houthi negotiators in Riyadh, indicating a desire to support peace talks and end the Yemen war. On October 31, 2023, the Houthis fired drones and missiles against Israel, and by November, they had extended to assaulting Israeli-owned or Israel-bound ships in the southern Red Sea. In January, the UK and US commenced airstrikes against Houthi targets in Yemen. Although Iran denies involvement, the US claims Iran's Revolutionary Guards have helped plan and carry out the Houthi missile and drone assaults. In January, an Iranian insider informed Reuters that the Revolutionary Guards provided advanced weaponry training to the Houthis. "A group of Houthi fighters were in Iran last month and were trained in an IRGC base in central Iran to become familiar with new technology and missile use," they said, adding that Iranian commanders had also traveled to Yemen to establish a command center in the capital Sanaa for the Red Sea attacks.

### ➤ Recent Tensions: Israel-Iran Conflict Unfolded

Israel and Iran have been in a secret conflict for many years, and recently things have gotten even more tense, raising concerns about a bigger fight in the area. Here's a timeline of what happened since the



# IRANIAN REGIME'S ATTACK ON ISRAEL

APRIL 13TH-APRIL 14TH, 2024

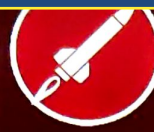
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attack Gaza and then other places without a fight. He said they might take action soon. Iran's top leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, criticized Israel for attacking Gaza and warned of a response if it kept going. Yemen's Houthi group, who Iran supports, took control of a ship in the Red Sea in response to what they called terrible things happening to Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. There was a cyber attack that stopped almost all of Iran's fuel stations from working. Iran said a group linked to Israel was behind it. An Israeli airstrike near Damascus in Syria killed a top commander who was helping Iran and Syria work together militarily. The Iranian military shot missiles at what they said was an Israeli spy outpost in Iraq and also targeted ISIS in Syria, saying they were defending themselves. Israel killed five Iranian advisors in Syria, according to Iran's military, and attacked Iran's consulate in Syria's capital, Damascus. Iran blamed Israel for blowing up one of its important gas pipelines twice, causing big problems in many areas. In a suspected Israeli attack, Iran's consulate in Syria's Damascus was destroyed, killing 13 people. Iran's military seized a ship near the Strait of Hormuz, saying it was connected to Israel. In a big move, Iran attacked Israel with hundreds of drones and missiles in what they called Operation True Promise. It was the first time Iran directly attacked Israel from its own soil. Israel, with help from the US, UK, France, and Jordan, managed to stop most of the missiles. Some people got hurt, including a little girl who was badly hurt by missile pieces. Israel had said to respond following an attack on April 13, 2024 marking the first direct assault on Israel by Iran. Despite causing no casualties due to Israel and its allies intercepting numerous missiles and drones, Tehran had initiated these strikes in retaliation for an alleged Israeli airstrike on April 1, 2024. This earlier strike had targeted a building within Iran's embassy compound in Damascus, resulting in the deaths of several Iranian officers, including a prominent general. On April 19, 2024, that Israel conducted a retaliatory strike against Iran. The extent of the damage caused by the strike remained unclear, but the official, speaking anonymously to address delicate military affairs, emphasized that the action aimed to underscore Israel's capability to target locations within Iran.

## ► A Comparison of Iran, Israel military might

In comparison to Israel's military budget of \$24.4 billion, Iran allocates only \$10 billion toward advanced weaponry and superior force. Several Western media outlets argue that Israel possesses 612 aircraft compared to Iran's 551 and 146 helicopters versus Iran's 129 (with only 13 attack helicopters, contrasting with Israel's 48). They assert Israel's strategic nuclear triad — the capacity to launch nuclear strikes from land, air, and sea — provides it with a formidable deterrent unmatched by Iran. Conversely, Iran asserts numerical superiority in tanks, rockets, and towed artillery. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Israel is estimated to possess around 80 nuclear weapons, with approximately 30 being gravity bombs deliverable by aircraft and the remaining 50 deployable via Jericho II medium-range ballistic missiles, believed to be stationed with mobile launchers in caves at a military base east of Jerusalem.

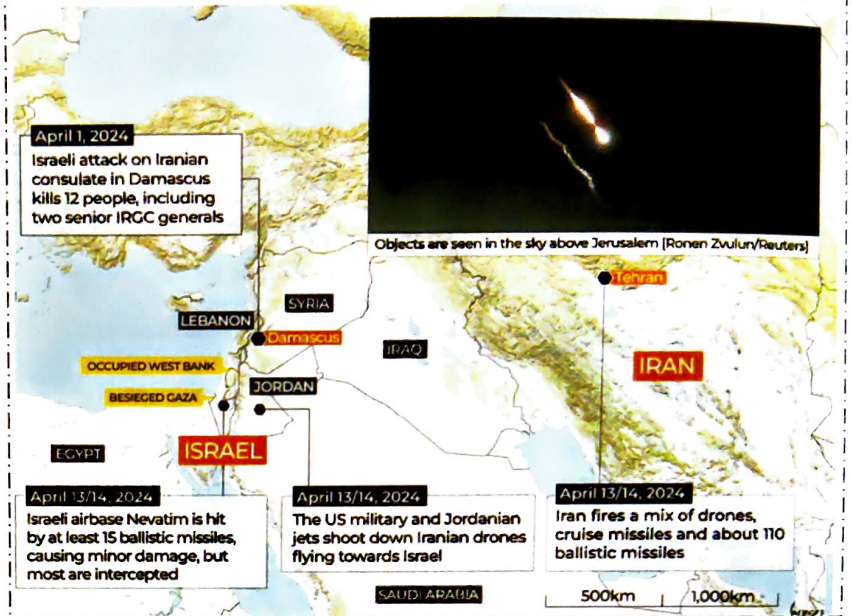


According to a story broadcast on Al-Jazeera Television on October 11, 2023, military service is mandatory for Israeli citizens above the age of 18, with men serving for 32 months and women serving for 24. Israel receives about \$3.8 billion in military funding from the United States each year, bolstering its position as one of the world's most powerful military forces, backed by a massive military infrastructure. Citing the International Institute for Strategic Studies' (IISS) Military Balance 2023 report, the Doha-based media outlet adds that Israel has 169,500 active military personnel across the army, navy, and paramilitary branches, supplemented by 465,000 reservists and 8,000 paramilitaries. Its land forces include 2200+ tanks and 530 artillery units. Airpower consists of 339 combat-capable aircraft, comprising 309 fighter-ground attack jets (196 F-16s, 83 F-15s, and 30 F-35s) and 142 helicopters (43 Apache assault helicopters).

#### ISRAEL'S WAR ON GAZA

### Iran launches drones, missiles at Israel

Israel says nearly all incoming drones and missiles - numbering more than 300 - from Iran, Iraq and Yemen have been intercepted. Iran says the attack is in response to an Israeli strike on its consulate in Syria on April 1 and that the matter can now "be deemed concluded".



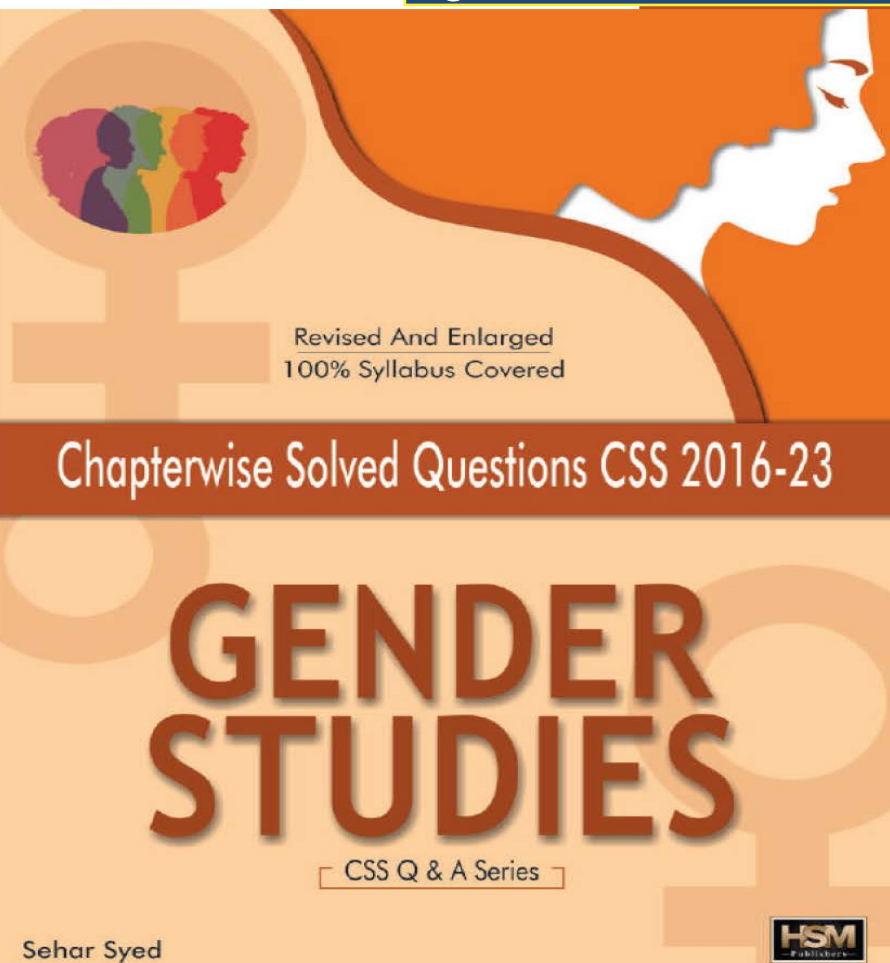
The naval force consists of five submarines and 49 patrol and coastal combat vessels. Israel's military expenditures in 2022 totaled \$23.4 billion, or \$2,535 per capita from 2018 to 2022, making it the world's second-largest military spender per capita behind Qatar. During the same time period, Israel imported weapons worth \$2.7 billion from only the United States and Germany. In contrast, Iran's military budget in 2022 was \$6.8 billion. According to the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies and other renowned Western research tanks, Iran's military forces have the most active troops in the Middle East.

Iran's military consists of roughly 587,000 active-duty members, 200,000 reservists, and trained personnel ready for mobilization, for a total of approximately 787,000 personnel. According to a recent New York Times story, Iran's military forces are among the largest in the Middle East, with over 580,000 active-duty members and over 200,000 reserve personnel, comprising both the conventional army and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. According to the New York Times, Iran has one of the region's largest arsenals of ballistic missiles and drones, including cruise missiles, anti-ship missiles, and ballistic missiles with ranges of over 2,000 kilometers that can target any location in the Middle East, including Israel. The New York Times also emphasizes Iran's recent acquisition of drones with ranges of 1,200 to 1,550 miles and the ability to fly at low altitudes to avoid radar detection. While Iran's military is considered strong in terms of equipment, cohesion, experience, and personnel quality, it lags behind the United States, Israel, and a few European countries in terms of power and sophistication. Furthermore, in a January 18, 2024 report, NDTV of India acknowledges Iran's significant military prowess, including the Islamic Republic of Iran Army, the Islamic Republic of Iran Air Force (IRIAF), and the Islamic Republic of Iran Navy, with the latter maintaining a diverse fleet of 67 units, including frigates, corvettes, and submarines.

### ➤ Israel's Multi-Front Challenges: Regional Threats

Israel finds itself in a precarious geopolitical situation, facing threats from multiple fronts. It is currently engaged in conflicts with Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah along the Lebanon border, and directly with Iran itself. The threat posed by Hezbollah is particularly concerning due to the group's substantial arsenal of missiles capable of inflicting significant damage on Israeli cities. A full-scale involvement by Hezbollah in support of Iran would undoubtedly provoke a robust Israeli response, potentially reigniting conflict in Lebanon. Recent events have shattered previous assumptions that Iran would refrain from open attacks on Israel, and vice versa. The ongoing tensions between the two nations suggest a prolonged period of competition and conflict. Despite pressure to exercise restraint, Israel views itself as engaged





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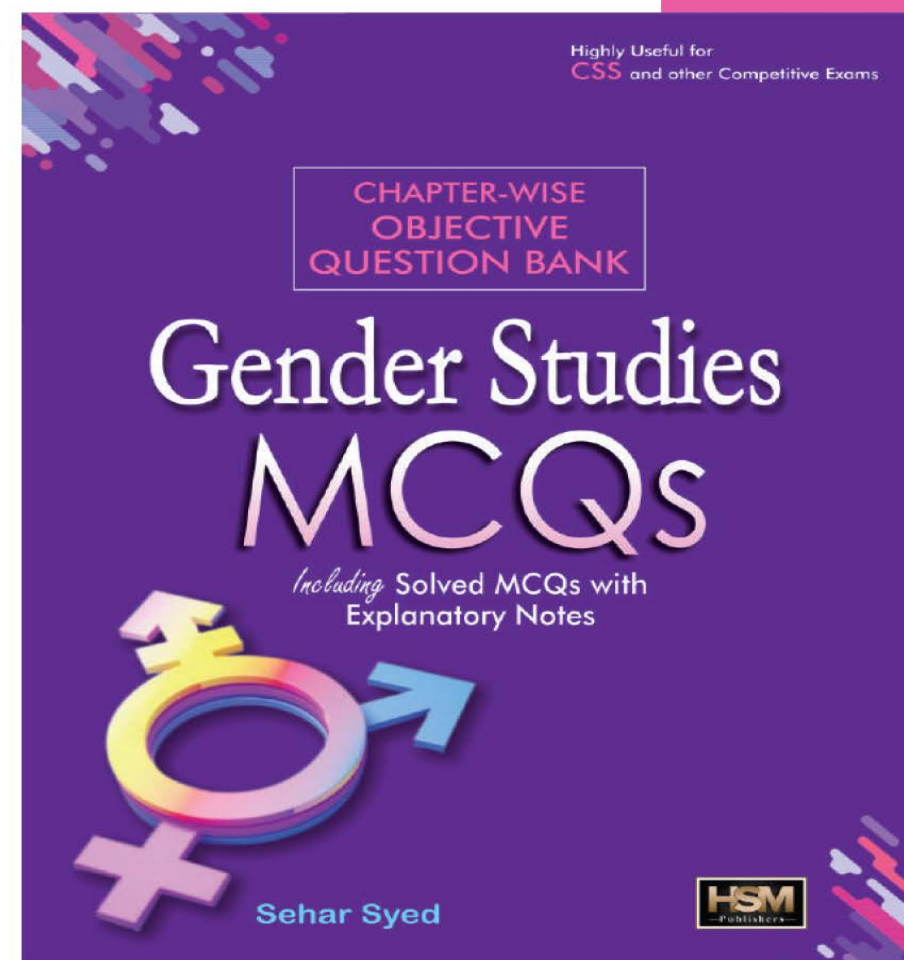
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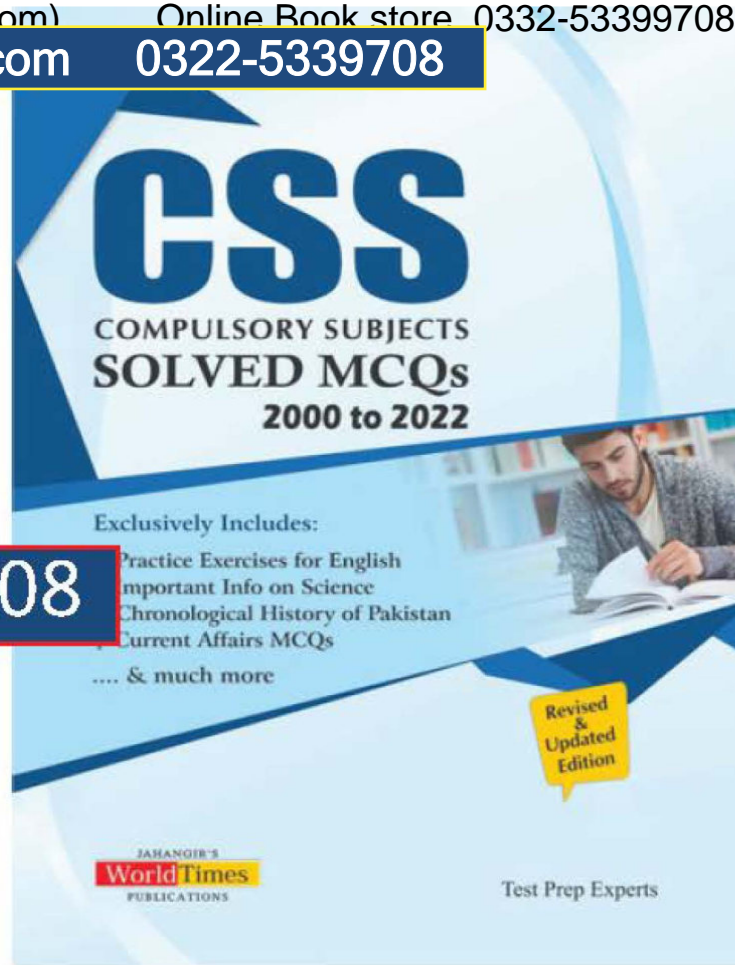
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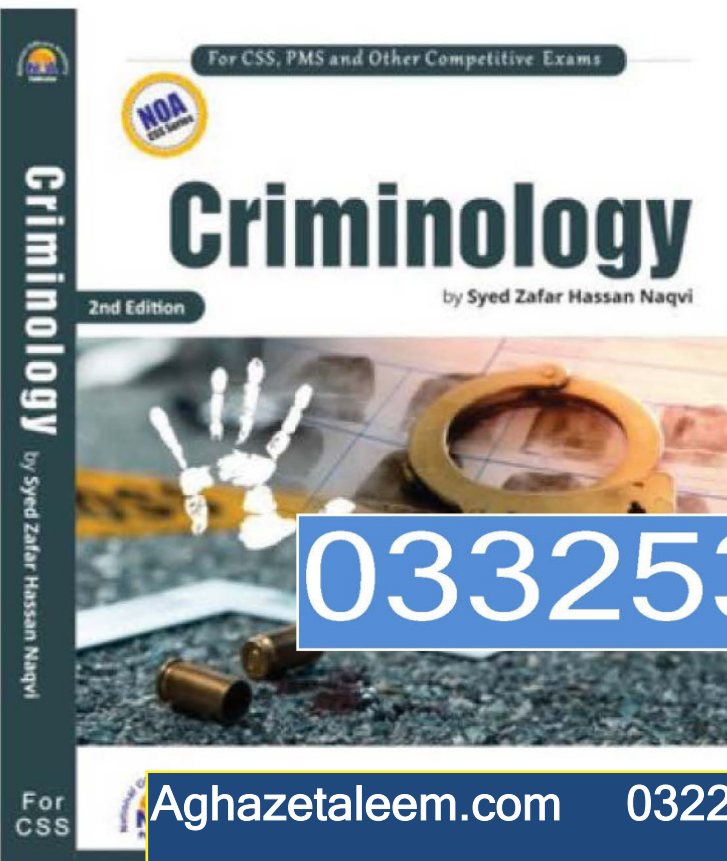


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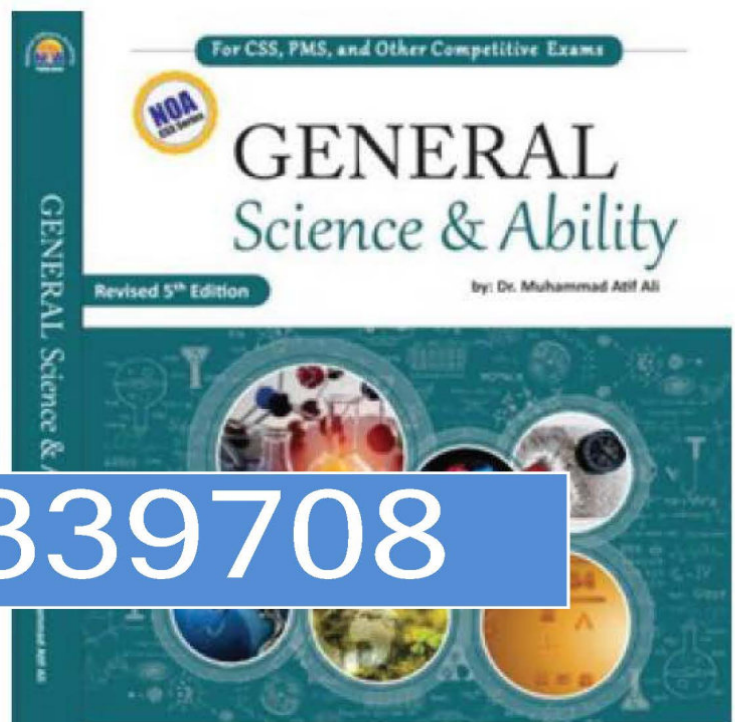
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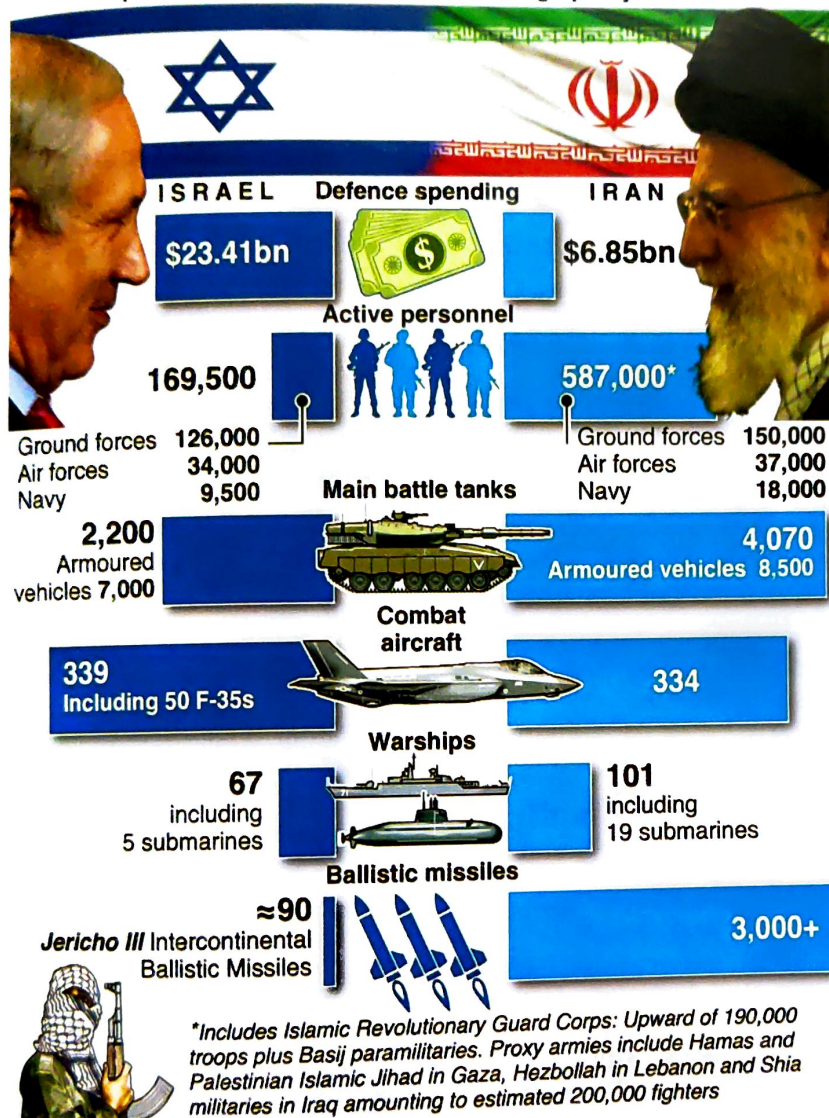
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## Israel-Iran military strength

Shadow warfare between Israel and Iran increasingly threatens to spill over into open conflict. Iran avoids state-on-state hostility, instead pursuing asymmetrical warfare through proxy armies



Sources: International Institute for Strategic Studies, SIPRI

in an existential struggle with Iran. This perception has historically led to unilateral action by Israel, even against the advice of its allies. Iran's retaliatory actions against Israel signal a shift in its approach, indicating that attacks on Israeli targets will no longer go unanswered. While the recent events may set the stage for a prolonged cycle of escalation in the region, Israel's ability to evade Iran's air defenses may reaffirm its strategic advantage. There are concerns among experts that these direct exchanges with Israel could prompt Iran to accelerate its pursuit of nuclear weapons, posing a significant threat to regional and international stability.

### ➤ Iran-Israel Conflict: Escalation, Consequences, and Calls for Restraint

The shadow conflict between Iran and Israel has significantly escalated, with Tel Aviv targeting Tehran's assets, especially in Syria, over the past decade amidst the chaos of civil war. Additionally, numerous Iranian scientists, particularly those involved in the nuclear program, have been assassinated within Iran in actions widely attributed to Israel. Despite Iran's reputation for strategic patience, the April 1 Israeli strike on an Iranian diplomatic facility in Damascus, resulting in the deaths of senior Iranian generals, crossed a red line. Pressure mounted

internally in Iran to respond to this perceived Israeli aggression, prompting Tehran to retaliate on April 13 with an assault on Israel. While the attack lacked significant destructive impact, it delivered a substantial strategic and PR victory for Iran. The recent suspected Israeli strikes on Iranian facilities in Isfahan mark the latest development in this dangerous conflict. Although Tel Aviv has not officially acknowledged the Isfahan incident, some Israeli politicians have lauded the attacks, while American media, citing sources, and attribute them to Israel. Iran, meanwhile, appears to be downplaying the event, with key installations in the area seemingly unaffected. Calls for de-escalation resonate from global capitals, recognizing that a wider war serves no one's interests except, perhaps, extremists within Israel. True de-escalation necessitates Israel's adherence to normal state behavior, rather than perpetuating a rogue nation image that threatens regional stability and Palestinian well-being. UN Secretary-General warns of the catastrophic consequences of miscalculation, emphasizing the delicate balance in the region. However, some suggest that Netanyahu's government may view a conflict with Iran as a convenient distraction from domestic and international criticism of its Gaza policies. A potential confrontation between the Israeli-Western coalition and Iran and its allies risks triggering a Middle Eastern explosion, disrupting global trade and inflating oil prices. To prevent such a scenario, Washington, London, and Brussels must address Israel's destabilizing actions effectively.



## ➤ Precarious Geopolitical Landscape: Jordan's Balancing Act

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is sandwiched between two regional powers and could face serious social, political, and economic ramifications if regional tensions continue to rise. Any regional changes, like as increased hostility between Iran and Israel or an Israeli incursion into Rafah, might have destabilizing domestic consequences.

**"Any imminent Iranian-Israeli conflict will place Jordan in a delicate situation," stated Sean Yom, a specialist on Jordan at Temple University and author of "From Resilience to Revolution," in an interview with Al Jazeera. "Publicly, Jordan must remain neutral and refrain from aligning with any party involved."**

Jordan has called for a cease-fire in Israel's Gaza conflict and has made public its attempts to give help in the beleaguered area. However, these efforts have not appeased demonstrators who have gathered outside the US and Israeli embassies, demanding an end to relations with Israel and the US. Since October 7, Jordanian protests have fluctuated as Israel's campaign in Gaza claimed the lives of over 34,000 Palestinians. Analysts observe that the Jordanian monarchy has attempted to persuade the United States and Israel to arrange a truce and enhance aid to Gaza, but these efforts have yielded little benefits. A recent event has increased emotions. On Saturday night, April 13, the Royal Jordanian Air Force intercepted and shot down several Iranian drones traveling over Jordanian territory on their way to Israel. Ayman Safadi, Jordan's Foreign Minister, stated that this measure was taken to defend Jordan's national borders. The event sparked resentment in Iran, with threats addressed toward Jordan, but tensions cooled following diplomatic contacts. Iran's Foreign Ministry later described Jordan as a diplomatic partner and a regular state with normal relations.

In fact, this incident has the potential to improve Jordan's relations with Iran. The two countries have previously discussed normalization, and this incident may speed up those discussions. Despite efforts to maintain regional stability, Jordan's policy preferences have frequently been challenged by its allies, particularly the United States. This has frustrated the Jordanian administration, which sees insufficient attempts to secure a truce, avert regional escalation, and offer relief to Palestinians in Gaza.

## ➤ Israel-Iran Escalation and Its Economic Implications

The Middle Eastern region, crucial for energy supply and shipping routes, has been under scrutiny since Israel's offensive in Gaza commenced after an attack by Hamas on October 7, 2023. Israel's siege of Gaza has resulted in significant casualties and devastation, with the United Nations reporting dire humanitarian conditions and the threat of famine. While immediate fears of a full-scale war between Israel and Iran appear to be receding, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has warned of a precarious situation in the Middle East. The ongoing Gaza conflict and tensions between Iran and Israel raise the spectre of a broader regional conflict. Amidst these concerns, countries are considering measures to mitigate the potential economic fallout. An escalation could disrupt oil supplies and lead to significant price hikes, impacting inflation and trade dynamics. Economic analysts emphasize the need for prudent economic management in light of increased uncertainty.

The potential for conflict in the Middle East poses challenges for Pakistan's economy, already grappling with inflation and macroeconomic imbalances. An escalation could further strain growth prospects and debt sustainability, with implications for international trade and inflation dynamics. The ongoing conflict exacerbates an already challenging economic environment, with implications for regional stability and global commodity markets. Uncertainty surrounding the situation prompts caution among investors, potentially affecting investment plans in affected countries like Pakistan.

## ➤ Israel-Iran Tensions and the Specter of Regional War

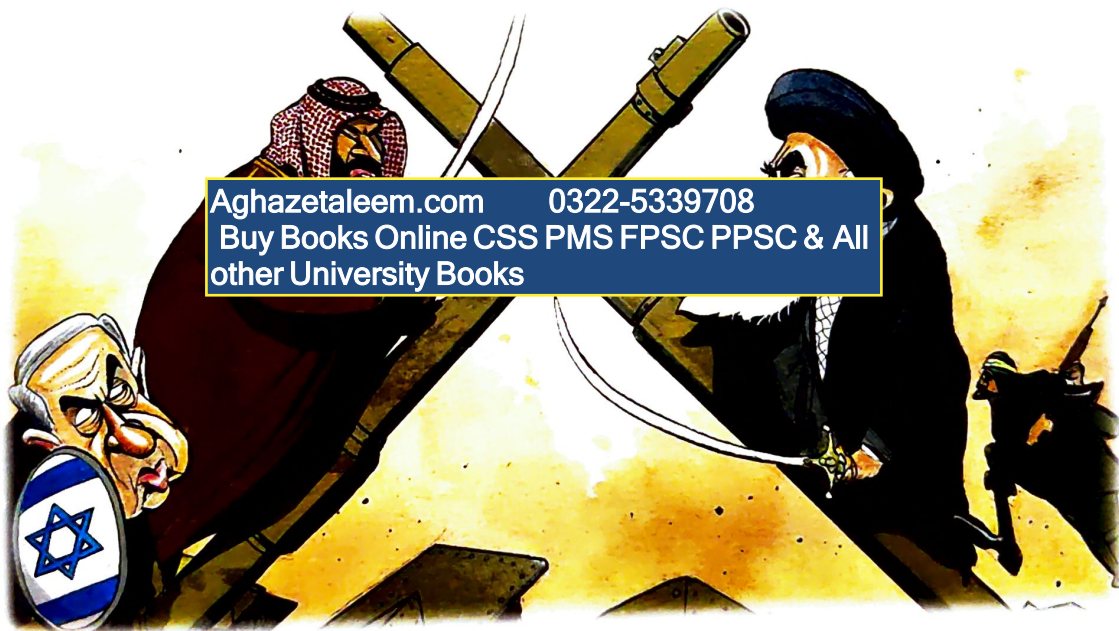
This direct military confrontation represents a significant shift in the covert conflict between Israel and Iran. Both countries have crossed red lines, with Iran demonstrating its capability to strike Israeli targets from its own soil. The international community has called for restraint, recognizing the potential for catastrophic consequences if the conflict escalates further. The risk of miscalculation remains high, posing a grave threat to regional stability. The ongoing crisis in Gaza further complicates the situation, with Israel's prolonged military campaign exacerbating tensions in the region. International efforts to broker a ceasefire have stalled, raising concerns about the humanitarian situation and the potential for



further escalation. To prevent the crisis from spiraling into a regional conflict, major powers must intervene to pressure Israel to end its military campaign in Gaza. Failure to do so could have dire consequences for the entire region.

### ➤ The GCC's Diplomatic Balancing Act in the Middle East

Amidst the evolving landscape of the Middle East, the six members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) find themselves navigating treacherous waters, striving to avoid entanglement in the escalating conflict dynamics that pose significant threats to their national security and economic stability. With the exception of Bahrain, all GCC nations condemned the Israeli strike on Iran's diplomatic facility in Syria on April 1st; though Kuwait was the sole member to explicitly name Israel. The United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia likely pursued a delicate balancing act to avoid appearing aligned with the Iran-led "axis of resistance." Following Tehran's bold retaliation twelve days later, GCC states expressed concern and urged de-escalation, albeit refraining from outright condemnation of Iran. Saudi Arabia promptly refuted reports suggesting its involvement in intercepting Iranian drones and missiles targeting Israel. As tensions mount, the interests of the UAE and Saudi Arabia diverge from alignment with either Iran or Israel. Abu Dhabi, having restored full diplomatic relations with Iran merely two years after normalizing ties with Israel in 2020, aims to maintain a relatively neutral stance in the Middle East, embracing a multifaceted or even non-aligned approach to geopolitics. Similarly, Saudi Arabia adopts a reserved response on the global stage, evident in its subdued reaction to Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Both nations prioritize their roles as trade and commercial hubs connecting diverse regions worldwide, envisioning a post-oil future. Their focus lies on achieving economic diversification and long-term prosperity while maintaining stability within their borders and throughout the broader region.



### ➤ Economic Imperatives & Strategic Calculations of Gulf States

Mira al-Hussein, a sociologist from the UAE and a research fellow at the University of Edinburgh's Alwaleed Centre, emphasizes the UAE and Saudi Arabia's keen focus on economic growth and attracting foreign investment. Hussein said, "While some level of regional instability has brought high-net-worth individuals and skilled workers to the region, excessive instability could undermine these gains". Sheikh Nawaf Bin Mubarak Al-Thani, a security expert and former Qatar defense attache to the US, Canada, and Mexico, expressed concerns over the possibility of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries being drawn into another prolonged conflict without significant benefits. He emphasized the risk of GCC nations bearing the brunt of such conflicts with minimal returns.

Many commentators in the Gulf and Jordan suggest that Iran's April 13 attack was primarily theatrical, serving to bolster both Iranian and Israeli narratives. From this perspective, Iran's actions did not contribute to advancing ceasefire efforts in Gaza or progressing Palestinian statehood, while also posing significant regional security risks. The impact of recent hostilities on the emerging rapprochement



between Riyadh and Tehran remains a crucial question. The motivations behind Saudi Arabia's decision to restore diplomatic relations with Iran last year persist, as do similar considerations on the Iranian side. Riyadh's restrained response to escalating tensions between Iran and Israel, along with its efforts to distance itself from the US-UK airstrikes on Houthi targets in Yemen, reflect its commitment to preserving the detente with Tehran and preventing its derailment.

### ➤ Regional Tensions: Saudi Arabia's Concerns and the Role of Israel



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However, despite recent developments, Saudi Arabia maintains a deep-seated suspicion of Iran and its array of Tehran-aligned Arab non-state actors, many of which have a history of hostility toward the kingdom. Riyadh's policymakers are particularly concerned about the potential actions of various Iran-backed groups within the "axis of resistance" if regional tensions escalate, and how such actions might impact the security and geopolitical interests of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) members. These uncertainties pose a significant challenge to the stability of the Saudi-Iranian detente amid rising regional tensions. The future actions of Israel will play a pivotal role in shaping the situation. According to Al-Thani, if Israel exercises restraint—whether through limited military operations or operations with minimal casualties—then the Saudi-Iranian relationship may remain largely unchanged. However, the unpredictable nature of the current situation means that events could escalate rapidly. It is crucial to

recognize that Iran's recent actions, including the firing of drones and missiles at Israel, serve multiple purposes beyond mere deterrence. Tehran aims to demonstrate the capabilities of Iranian weaponry to its neighbours while highlighting the extent of US commitment to Israel's security, surpassing that offered to its allies in the Arabian Peninsula. Gulf states comprehend the one-sided nature of their relationship with Israel and the limited influence they have in de-escalating conflicts involving Tel Aviv. Consequently, Gulf Arab states find themselves compelled to manage their individual relationships with Iran while also addressing domestic expectations and rising discontent. Given these complex dynamics, officials in GCC states are deeply apprehensive about future developments. While all parties involved—including the Gulf states, Iran, and the Biden administration—prefer to avoid further escalation.



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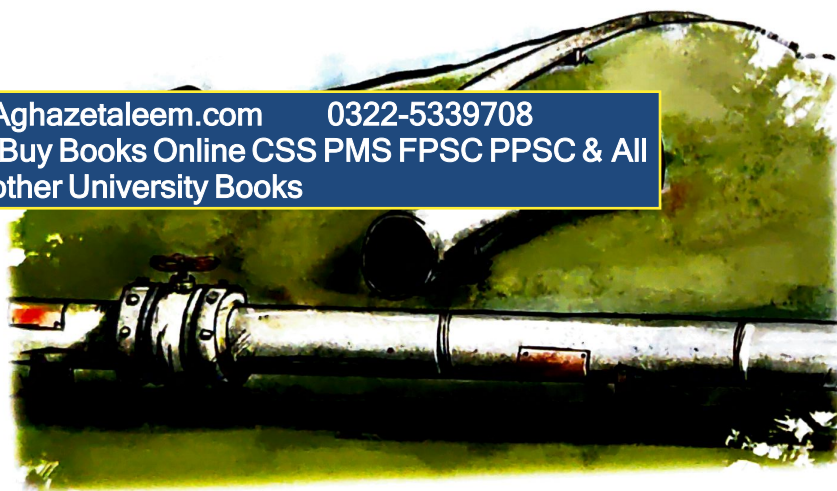


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# Iran-Pakistan Gas Pipeline & Diplomatic Crossroads

## Unravelling the Distortions

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A significant milestone in the pursuit of economic connectivity between Pakistan and Iran was marked on March 13, 2024, when the country declared the commencement of construction on a 49-mile (80-kilometer) section of the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline, colloquially referred to as the 'Peace Pipeline,' through its borders. At the time of India's withdrawal in 2008, the Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) pipeline, which was initially proposed in 1994, underwent a transformation into a bilateral partnership between Pakistan and Iran. As escalating U.S. sanctions against Iran occurred

concurrently with India's 2008 ratification of a civil nuclear agreement with the U.S., India was influenced to withdraw from the project. India formally ceased its involvement in the project the subsequent year, citing apprehensions regarding pricing and security. Ankara hosted an IP project agreement between Pakistan and Iran in March 2010. A substantial monetary penalty was imposed for failure to complete the pipeline segment for each country by 2014, as stipulated in the agreement. The Ministry of Finance in Pakistan expressed apprehensions regarding funding as early as March 2012. Cooperation with Russia, Iran, or China was among the alternatives. However, in March 2013, official pipeline construction began after Pakistan ratified the agreement in January 2013.

### ➤ Pipeline Route and Collaboration Agreement

Commencing from the Pars energy economic zone and extending to Iranshahr and Bushehr via Fars, Kerman, Hormozghan, and Sistan-Balochistan, the Iranian segment spans a distance of 1,100 kilometers. The Pakistani section, on the other hand, spans approximately 780 kilometers from the frontier to Nawabshah, with 665 kilometers traversing Balochistan and 115 kilometers traversing Sindh. A new agreement for the pipeline's construction was established in September 2019 between the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) and Pakistan's Inter State Gas Systems (ISGS). The objective of this agreement was to develop a pragmatic resolution for the completion of the project, which is projected to cost around \$158 million. The IP pipeline, which extends from the Iranian frontier to the port area of Gwadar in the southwestern Balochistan province of Pakistan, has been impeded in its progression by Islamabad as a result of financial constraints caused by U.S. sanctions against Iran. It is anticipated that Pakistan will meet all of its financial obligations by the year 2024. It is noteworthy to mention that Iran purportedly allocated \$2.0 billion towards the pipeline initiative situated on its frontier.

### ➤ Diplomatic Assertiveness and Administrative Facilitation

Notwithstanding concerns expressed by the United States regarding possible contraventions of sanctions levied against Iran, a spokesperson for the Pakistan Foreign Ministry, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, declared



on March 7, 2024 that the Iran-Pakistan pipeline project is advancing "in accordance with our dedication to this endeavour." Additionally, she

underscored that Pakistan does not find any reason to oppose external objections given that the construction operations are limited to Pakistani soil. Beforehand, on February 23, 2024, the Cabinet Committee on Energy of Pakistan authorized the commencement of construction on the IP pipeline project through its approval. The logistical support for this undertaking will be provided by the Gas Infrastructure



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Development Cess (GIDC), an initiative of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC). Now that the project is under the supervision of SIFC, it is well-positioned to effectively overcome bureaucratic obstacles, which will facilitate its advancement.

### ➤ **Extension, Legal Strategy, and Regional Dynamics**

According to reports, Tehran granted Islamabad a 180-day extension in February 2024, until September 2024, to finish constructing the pipeline's 500-mile segment. The primary aim of the extension is to preempt potential legal conflicts that may arise between the two nations before international tribunals. As reported by Al-Monitor, a Middle Eastern news source, an international law firm has advised Pakistan's petroleum division to alter its strategies in response to Western sanctions. This modification involves replicating the effective 2022–2023 Iran–Gwadar electricity transmission line. They suggest beginning construction of a shorter "pipe" from the Pakistan–Iran frontier to Gwadar rather than constructing an entire pipeline from Iran. By aligning the language in question with the objective of obtaining a sanctions waiver, a 50-mile segment of the pipeline could be extended to link Gwadar with Iran's primary pipeline. The initial pipeline segment connecting Gwadar to Iran's primary pipeline guarantees immediate gas supply to Gwadar. In light of the volatile nature of LNG prices, this undertaking assumes critical importance for Pakistan as it ensures a dependable energy provision. The gas sales from Iran to Azerbaijan serve as evidence that comparable transactions can continue in defiance of the obstacles presented by United States sanctions. Moreover, the rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Iran in 2023, which was facilitated by China, suggests that impediments to the completion of the project may diminish. Furthermore, a concerted effort is being made to establish secure and sustainable energy linkages and regional connectivity in order to meet the expanding domestic demand.

### ➤ **Energy Security and Socioeconomic Development**

The Iran–Pakistan gas pipeline project, once fully operationalized, will yield substantial advantages for both nations by bolstering energy security and economic relations. Its anticipated daily gas output of 750 million cubic feet has the potential to significantly alleviate Pakistan's energy crisis. The initiative represents advancements in energy security for Pakistan, as it diminishes dependence on Gulf states and Western powers. It could also achieve an annual cost savings of up to one billion dollars by substituting the costly furnace oil with Iranian gas. Additionally, the pipeline provides a reliable substitute gas supply and strengthens Pakistan's stance in negotiations regarding liquefied natural gas imports. Furthermore, employment generation is anticipated to occur in Balochistan and Sindh, thereby fostering socioeconomic progress in these localities.

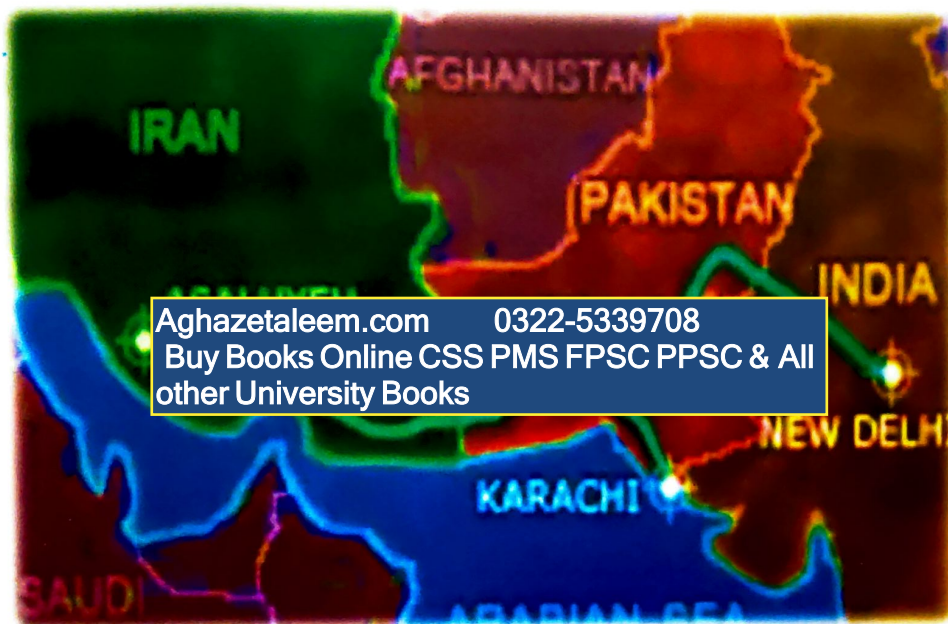
### ➤ **Economic Opportunities and Environmental Sustainability**

The undertaking affords Iran an opportunity to alleviate its economic isolation and expand the productive utilization of its extensive natural gas reserves. In the midst of shifting regional geopolitics, it could also strengthen bilateral political ties and expedite the implementation of a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) that the two nations have been discussing. Reduced carbon emissions and improved air quality result from the greener nature of natural gas in comparison to coal and oil. Environmental sustainability is advanced and Pakistan's carbon footprint is reduced through its extensive application



in power generation and industry. The IP Gas pipeline presents a highly favourable and feasible alternative for Pakistan when analysed from an economic and commercial perspective. Pakistan ought to continue pursuing the IP gas pipeline due to its cost-effectiveness and ample economic advantages, including the fulfilment of energy requirements and the facilitation of economic recuperation. Pakistan must prioritize domestic energy initiatives that effectively tackle its critical energy requirements, notwithstanding the potential existence of global concerns. The newly formed government, which is now tasked with determining the IP project's fate, and the SIFC's actions are primarily predicated on the undertaking's development and completion.

### ➤ Navigating Diplomatic Crossroads: Pipeline Project and U.S. Priorities



Recent developments surrounding the Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline project have highlighted the intricate interplay between energy security, diplomatic relations, and geopolitical interests. Amidst Washington's assertion of support for Pakistan's energy needs and its opposition to the pipeline project, Islamabad finds itself at a crossroads, balancing competing pressures and priorities. The United States has emphasized its commitment to assisting Pakistan in addressing its energy shortage crisis, citing various initiatives aimed at bolstering clean energy

capacity and environmental sustainability. However, Washington's stance on the Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline project diverges sharply from its broader objectives. The pipeline, a long-term collaboration between Tehran and Islamabad, has encountered numerous challenges, including delays and funding issues. Despite these obstacles, the Pakistani government took decisive action in February by commencing construction on a crucial segment of the pipeline to mitigate potential penalties from Tehran. Washington's opposition to the pipeline project raises questions about the nature of U.S.-Pakistan relations and the extent of American influence in the region. The warning of potential sanctions for engaging in business with Tehran underscores the complexities of navigating diplomatic ties in a volatile geopolitical landscape. Petroleum Minister Musadik Malik's assertion that Islamabad will seek exemption from U.S. sanctions reflects Pakistan's determination to pursue its energy objectives despite external pressures. The discrepancy between Malik's statement and the Foreign Office's position adds further complexity to the situation. While Malik emphasizes the need to secure exemptions from U.S. sanctions, the Foreign Office maintains a firm stance against seeking waivers from third parties. This divergence highlights internal divisions within the Pakistani government and underscores the challenges of presenting a unified front in diplomatic negotiations. The remarks made by U.S. diplomat Donald Lu during a congressional testimony underscore Washington's unwavering opposition to the pipeline project. Lu's assertion that Islamabad had not applied for a waiver for potential U.S. sanctions underscores the urgency of the situation and the need for swift action to address diplomatic concerns.

### ➤ Conclusion

The Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline project represents a critical juncture in the complex web of diplomatic relations and geopolitical interests in the region. As Pakistan seeks to address its energy shortage crisis, it must carefully navigate the competing pressures from Washington and Tehran while maintaining its sovereignty and strategic autonomy. The path forward will require diplomatic finesse, strategic decision-making, and a nuanced understanding of the evolving geopolitical landscape to achieve Pakistan's energy objectives while preserving its diplomatic relations with key stakeholders.

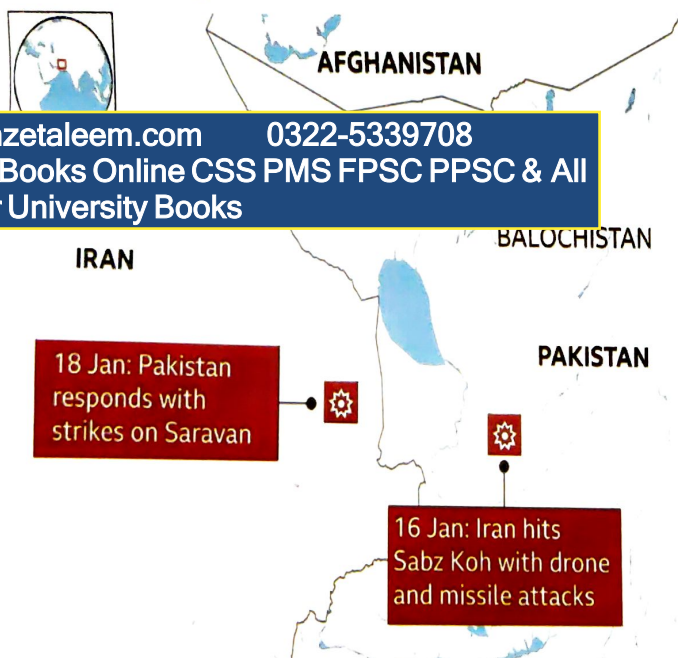


## Navigating the Geopolitical Quagmire: Iran's Missile Strikes

# Iran's Unprovoked Attack & Pakistan's Swift Response

## ~ ~ A 24-Hour Diplomatic Dance

### ➤ Escalating Tensions: Cross-Border Confrontation



The recent cross-border escalation between Pakistan and Iran has raised concerns about the country's political stability and security. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) carried out a coordinated missile and drone attack in the Sabz Koh region of Panjgur District, Pakistani Balochistan, on January 16, 2024. The attack targeted Jaish-el-Adl, an Iranian Baloch Sunni militant organization. Despite Iran's failure to provide a credible explanation or apology, Pakistan launched Operation "Marg Bar Sarmachar" (Death to Militants) on January 18, targeting Baloch militants affiliated with the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) and Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF) in Sistan-o-Balochistan Province, Iran.

Iran's military strikes in Baluchistan have intensified hostilities in an area already

tumultuous. The attack was aimed at the Sunni extremist organization Jaish al-Adl, leading to the deaths of two noncombatant individuals and the injuries of three others. Pakistan denounced the strike as an indiscriminate transgression of its sovereignty, alluding to possible consequences and voicing apprehensions regarding the erosion of bilateral confidence. Iran's strategic maneuver can be identified as a clear act of retaliation, following a fatal assault on an Iranian police station in Sistan-Balochistan last month. The present situation underscores the intricate equilibrium in the area, where geopolitical competition, internal discord, and the continuous struggle against terrorism combine to form a volatile amalgamation that can be incited by even the tiniest provocation.

### ➤ Iran's Provocation and Pakistan's Response: A Critical Analysis

The international community closely observes these developments, particularly in light of the Biden administration's contemplation of classifying the Houthis as global terrorists. The continued initiation of attacks by the Houthis, in spite of retaliatory actions taken by the United States and its allies, indicates the possibility of an expanded regional conflict. An essential inquiry emerges: to what extent will Iran's assault on Pakistan undermine its reputation within the Islamic community, especially in light of its significant involvement in the ongoing Gaza conflict? The potential application of force by Iran could have a significant adverse effect on its credibility, particularly among Western societies. Given the obstacles Pakistan encounters in safeguarding its borders and organizing for elections, its probability of engaging in Middle Eastern geopolitics diminishes. Pakistan's response to Iran's unprovoked assault on its airspace by launching Operation "Marg Bar Samachar" against terrorists in Iran and reiterating

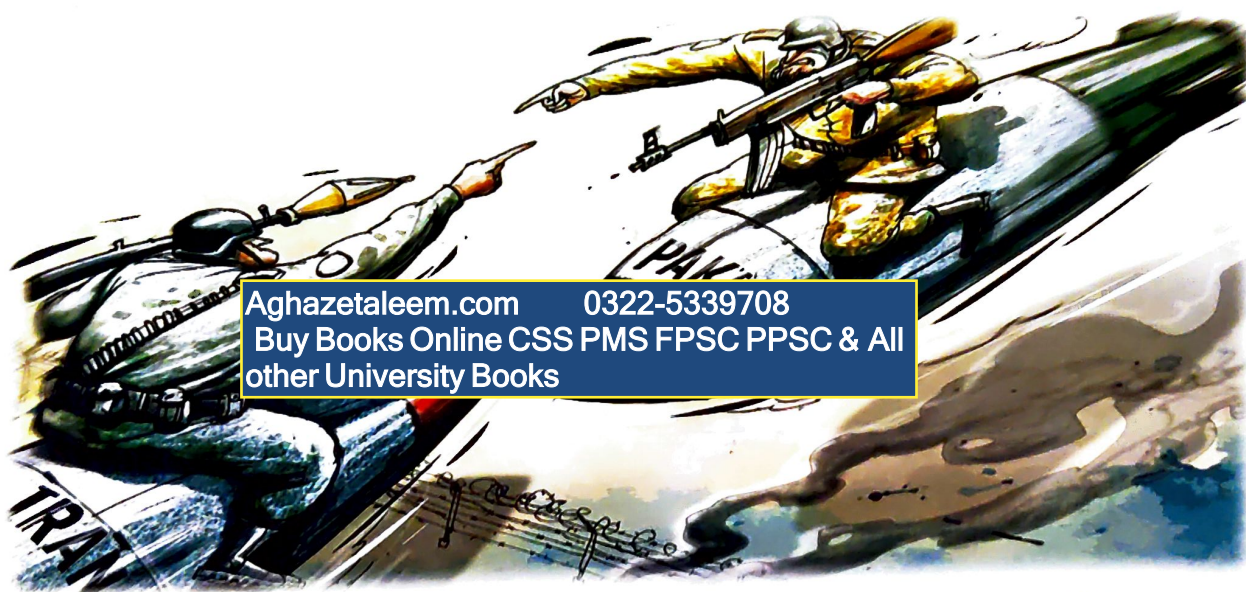


unequivocally that airspace transgressions would not be accepted. The Iranian government, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), and Iranian intelligence collectively bear responsibility for the attack. The lack of cooperation during the attack's planning process renders it a transgression of global laws and standards, exposing Iran's security deficiencies. The deliberate assimilation of terrorists in Iran serves as a cautionary tale, underscoring the potential for worsening repercussions from subsequent provocations.

### ➤ Iran's Aggression and Pakistan's Resolve: An Insightful Response

The impasse underscores the significance of prudent behavior among neighboring countries, as Pakistan reaffirms its dedication to safeguarding national security and its preparedness to retaliate forcefully against any potential dangers. Iran's missile strike against the civilian population in Pakistan on Tuesday was condemned as an "unprovoked violation" of Pakistani airspace. Pakistan's swift response to the attack demonstrates that even a nation striving for peace can forego strategic restraint in order to provide an appropriate response. Iran's motives for these assaults are unclear, but it is believed that Iran is leveraging the disillusionment among Muslim nations regarding the Gaza Strip to strengthen its reputation as a leader. Iran also considers the Subcontinent, specifically Afghanistan and Pakistan, to be within its longstanding spheres of influence, creating an opportunity for Iran to capitalize on Pakistan's political unrest.

### ➤ Challenges and Choices: Navigating Pakistan's Path Forward

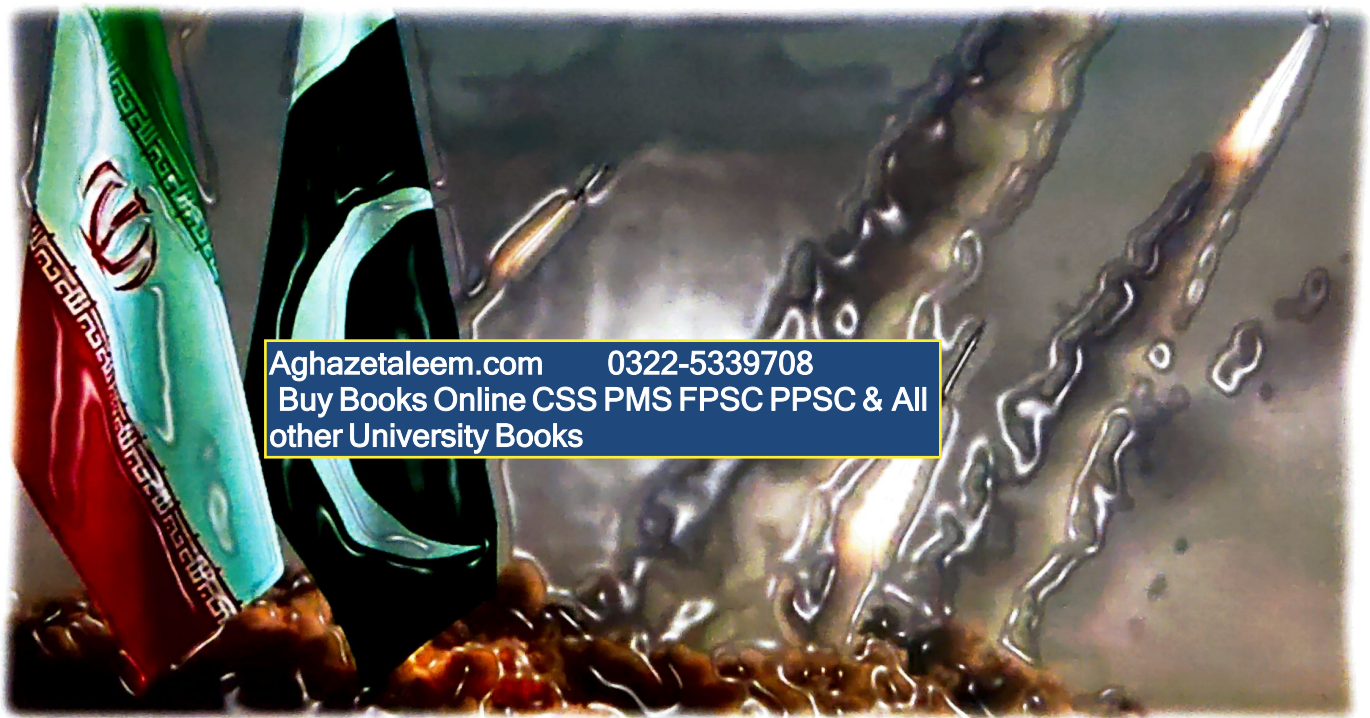


Pakistan has faced significant internal and external challenges, including a 40% poverty rate, a concerning escalation in acts of terrorism, and deteriorating relations with India. The escalation of hostilities between Iran and Pakistan has further exacerbated security apprehensions and underscored the need for collaborative efforts to combat transnational terrorism. The ongoing political division among the society and the potential for false-flag operations in India's elections have raised concerns about the future of the nation. Some factions propose delaying elections due to volatile situations and security concerns, while others argue that a reassessment of priorities is necessary. Prior to reviving the economy, they stress the importance of addressing internal security, national unity, stability, and the welfare of the people. While the difficulties are acknowledged, opposition exists to the notion of delaying elections until every concern has been resolved. Since two years ago, the nation has been mired in political instability, and an interim government is responsible for ensuring elections are conducted in a free and equitable manner. Only a representative government can formulate the long-term policy decisions required to stem the crisis. Analogies to countries like Iran, which conducted elections amidst a decade-long conflict, underscore the criticality of electoral procedures in difficult circumstances. The current difficulties in Pakistan highlight the critical requirement for a representative government capable of addressing intricate matters and guiding the nation through the imminent crisis. It is strongly recommended that politicians prioritize national interests over limited political agendas and apply their collective intelligence for the betterment of the nation and its afflicted citizens.



## ➤ **Lessons Learned: Pakistan's Strategic Evolution**

In the past five years, Pakistan has faced two significant national security crises that have established its "red lines" against potential aggressors. The first, Pulwama 2019, was strategic in nature, while the second, Panjgur 2024, was characterized as a tactical gambit that ultimately failed. The crisis highlighted the strengths of the Pakistani system, including astute diplomacy, well-developed media communication, military accuracy, and professionalism. Panjgur 2024 serves as a pivotal educational occasion, compelling Pakistan to embrace a holistic regional strategy towards counterterrorism and cultivate economic collaboration to ensure enduring stability. The establishment of 'laws of regional behavior,' the efficacy of the Pakistani System in crisis management, and the interdependence of national security and regional geopolitics are all significant insights gleaned from Panjgur. A 'Regional Reset' in Pakistan's foreign policy is suggested in anticipation of the country's election year in 2024. This reset entails the implementation of an economic-oriented strategy that prioritizes trade, connectivity, and investment over geopolitical factors, while also confronting the domestic origins of terrorism. In essence, Panjgur 2024 functions as a pivotal educational occasion, compelling Pakistan to embrace a holistic regional strategy towards counterterrorism and cultivate economic collaboration to ensure enduring stability.



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## ➤ **Regional Dynamics: Iran-Pakistan Missile Exchange**

The recent missile strikes by Iran inside Pakistan have engendered skepticism, with Pakistan's initial course of action being to reassign its envoy while retaining the Iranian ambassador. To defuse tensions, international actors such as China, Russia, and Turkey intervened, and diplomatic relations were successfully reestablished within 24 hours. Iran's recent missile attack on Pakistan's territory is not an isolated event; to comprehend why it occurred, one must view it within a broader regional context. Pakistan's strategic location, coupled with a competent naval force, positions Pakistan at the intersection of modern Middle Eastern politics. In the 21st century, traditional wars rooted in moral or ideological conflicts are deemed unsuitable. Grey zone warfare may persist as national interests clash, as seen in the timing of Iran's attack. The ongoing dispute over alleged terrorist camps across borders has been a longstanding issue between Iran and Pakistan. The provocative act raises questions about Iran's strategic objectives and the potential consequences. Understanding its limitations is crucial for rational state thinking. Iran, grappling with internal challenges, may have miscalculated the impact of its unprovoked aggression. The subsequent conciliatory tone in Iran's press release suggests an acknowledgment that the issue is settled between the two states with differences but no rivalry. The



exchange of missiles between Iran and Pakistan serves as a reminder that Pakistan is not on the sidelines but actively involved in shaping the future of Middle Eastern politics.

### ➤ Escalating Tensions: Iran-Pakistan Bilateral Relations

The unanticipated Iran-Pakistan incursion has caused significant concern and distress in the bilateral relationship between the two countries. The daring assault in the Panjgur district of the Balochistan province in Pakistan claimed the lives of two defenseless children, challenging Iran's claim that it was aimed at the Jaish Al-Adl militant organization. Despite the presence of a preexisting counterterrorism agreement between the two nations, tensions have been further exacerbated by Iran's unilateral execution of the operation. Iran and its proximate in Lebanon have made an unfounded effort to portray the attack as having been pre-coordinated with Pakistani authorities. As a retaliatory measure, Pakistan has opted to appoint its Iranian ambassador on recall and halt any forthcoming or premeditated high-level visits between the two countries. The provocative nature of Iran's recent actions, which have involved incursions into Iraq and the exertion of influence over the Houthis, has generated apprehension in the region. Non-state actors' activities and terrorism pose a threat to regional peace and security; terrorist organizations such as the TTP, Jaish Al-Adl, BLA, BLF, and IS-K all contribute to the instability.

In light of the shared adversary of terrorism, Iran must embrace a cooperative strategy as opposed to pursuing isolated measures. It is crucial to place regional stability as a top priority and deter jingoistic inclinations. Islamabad asserts its right to respond if requested. Amid Israel's offensive in Gaza on October 17, apprehensions emerged regarding the stance of the Pakistani government in the wake of the Hamas assault on Israelis and the subsequent Israeli reaction. The importance of ensuring consistency in the messaging of Pakistani officials and the reactions of significant Middle Eastern allies was underscored, discouraging any potential alignment with the Iranian regime.

### ➤ Conclusion

Pakistan was taken by surprise on January 16 when Iran launched missile strikes on Pakistani territory, coordinated with analogous assaults in Syria and Iraq. Tensions were escalated as a result of this violation of sovereignty at the Davos World Economic Forum, where the interim prime minister met with the Iranian foreign minister. The targets' ambiguous assertions by Iran added to the complexity of the situation, suggesting a premeditated approach rather than a simple absence of understanding. In light of the intricate circumstances surrounding 2024, Pakistan's resoluteness and self-control are considered indispensable for effectively navigating the challenges that lie ahead. In addition to economic reforms and shared responsibilities, unity and a timely election are essential for addressing the challenges confronting the populace.



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**The Disputes is Yet Far Away from Being Settled - - -**

# Indian Supreme Court's Verdict on Article 370 Abrogation

## Unravelling the Legality

On 5 August 2019, the Indian Government abrogated Article 370 of the Constitution of India via a presidential order. Article 370 provided special status to the State of Jammu and Kashmir, allowing it to have its own constitution and autonomy over internal administration. The abrogation ended the special status conferred on the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir and the Centre later moved to reorganize Jammu and Kashmir into two Union Territories – Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. This move by the Indian Government was challenged before the Indian Supreme Court and on 11 December 2023, a decision was rendered in the matter. In a unanimous ruling the court upheld the validity of the Constitutional order that revoked Article 370. The Indian Supreme Court's 476-page verdict upholding the abrogation of Article 370 is a saga of historical distortions, selective amnesia and logic-less interpretation. Not only does it do injustice to Jammu and Kashmir, it has set a precedent that threatens Indian democracy itself. It is an endorsement of the tendency of the Indian government to commit acts that violate India's own constitution and international law.



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### ➤ Judgment by the Indian Supreme Court

The Indian Supreme Court's 476-page verdict upholding the abrogation of Article 370 is an example of historical distortions, selective amnesia and logic-less interpretation. Not only does it do injustice to Jammu and Kashmir, it has set a precedent that threatens Indian democracy itself. It is an endorsement of the tendency of the Indian government to commit acts that violate India's own constitution and international law. The petitioners had argued that Article 370 had become a permanent feature of the Indian Constitution from the moment the Constituent Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir was formally dissolved in 1957. In fact, Article 370 was the basis of the Jammu and Kashmir Constitution. It was classed as a "temporary provision" because it was meant to be ratified by the Jammu and Kashmir Constituent Assembly. By not recommending the abrogation of the provision before its dissolution, the Assembly had endorsed its continued existence in the Indian Constitution to govern this unique federal relationship. A five-judge Constitution bench, presided by Chief Justice of India, DY Chandrachud, said



that Jammu and Kashmir held no internal sovereignty after accession to India. He said there was no prima facie case that the President's 2019 orders were mala fide (in bad faith) or extraneous exercise of power. While the court said the reorganization of the erstwhile state into Union Territories in 2019 was a temporary move, it directed the Centre for the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood and for the Legislative Assembly elections to be held by next year.

## ➤ Kashmir's History Disregarded by the Indian Supreme Court



### SC Verdict on abrogation of Art 370 Explained



#### SC Verdict

- **On the sovereignty of Jammu and Kashmir**- The SC held that merger of J&K with India was the same as the other princely states in India. The state of Jammu and Kashmir didn't enjoy any internal sovereignty.

##### SC Rationale

1. SC cited that **Karan Singh's proclamation**, issued by the son of the J&K's then ruler Hari Singh, on November 25, 1949, accepted the supremacy of the Indian Constitution and surrendered the J&K sovereignty to it.
2. SC also cited that **Section 3 of the J&K constitution** held J&K as an integral part of India. Section 147 of the J&K Constitution prohibited any amendment to Section 3.

- **On whether Art 370 is temporary or permanent**- SC held Art 370 that Article 370 was a temporary provision.

##### SC Rationale

1. SC contended that Art 370 as an interim arrangement until the Constituent Assembly of the State was formed. Art 370 served as a temporary legal bridge between J&K and India.
2. The provision was adopted because of the special circumstances in the state, which was experiencing war conditions at that time.

- **On the legality of the abrogation of Article 370**- SC upheld the legality of presidential proclamations CO 272 and CO 273 used to abrogate Article 370.

##### SC Rationale

- SC clarified that, after the Constituent Assembly of the state ceased to exist, the President could have always unilaterally abrogated Article 370.

- **On the action that was taken under President's rule**- SC upheld the action of state reorganisation of J&K during president's rule.

##### SC Rationale

- SC held that the decision taken during the President's rule to bifurcate the state of Jammu and Kashmir and to convert it into UT, was not mala fide. Hence no judicial review of the decision was required.

While declaring Article 370 to be temporary, the Court noted two factors. One was the war-like conditions that persisted when the special status was accorded. The second was the transitional purpose—the Article was meant to provide for an interim arrangement until the Constituent Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir could frame its own constitution. However, this is far from the truth. The Constitution, of which Article 370 was a part, was unanimously adopted in 1949. The war, also known as the First Kashmir War, was long over by then. The provision was meant to be temporary only until the Jammu and Kashmir Constituent Assembly could ratify Article 370 and adopt it while framing a separate constitution for the state. The court's finding that Article 370 was a temporary

provision until the Jammu and Kashmir Constituent Assembly was disbanded, after which the state would have been fully integrated, defies legal logic.

The Jammu and Kashmir Constitution declared that "the State of Jammu and Kashmir is and shall be an integral part of the Union of India." The Court, however, glossed over this fact and placed more reliance on the royal heir's proclamation of 1949 which acknowledged Jammu and Kashmir's integration. It was the Jammu and Kashmir Constituent Assembly, a constitutionally mandated and democratically elected body that gave its final affirmation. This had legal sanctity and superseded any previous proclamations. Furthermore, the Court refused to go into the question of whether the downgradation of the state to a Union Territory was valid. It also refused to deliberate the peculiar circumstances under which President's Rule was imposed in Jammu and Kashmir, the pivotal first act that served as a prologue to the legal fictions invented by the government to carry out the abrogation.

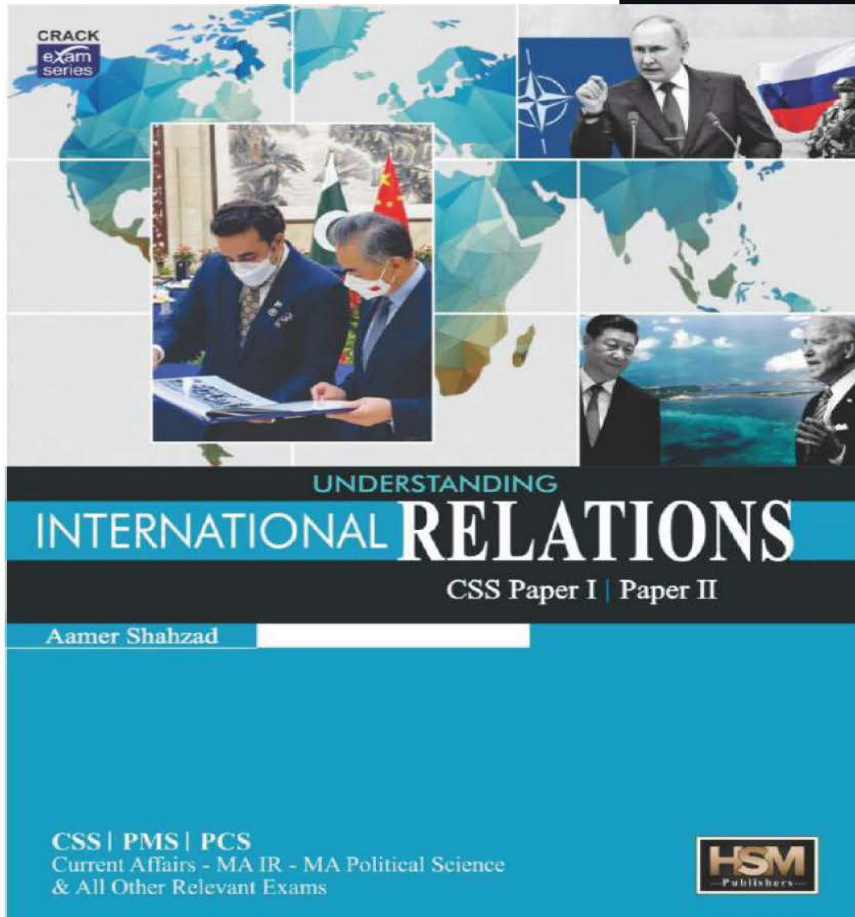
### Applicability of International Law to the Issue

International law applies to Kashmir in a number of ways. Despite India's reluctance to internationalize the Kashmir conflict in the name of national security, Kashmir is an international dispute. In accordance with established jurisprudence from the Permanent Court of International Justice ("PCIJ") and its successor, the International Court of Justice ("ICJ"), an international dispute involves "a disagreement on a point of law or fact, a conflict of legal views or of interests between two [international] persons", as well as conflicts arising from varying interpretations and executions (or lack thereof) of human rights-related obligations under international agreements and treaties. Furthermore, international law experts have characterized the Instrument of Accession of 1947, under which the Maharaja of Kashmir decided



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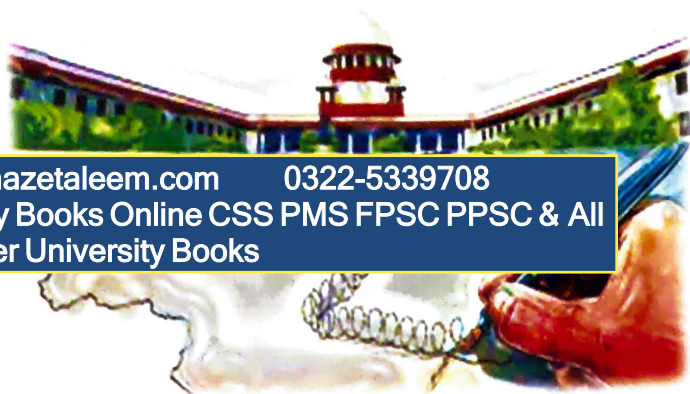


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## ➤ **Initiating ICC Recourse: Addressing Human Rights Violations in Kashmir**



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To pursue recourse through the International Criminal Court (ICC), Pakistan can initiate the process by filing a declaration of temporary acceptance of jurisdiction under Article 12(3), in conjunction with Article 15 of the Rome Statute. This involves drafting and submitting an application to the ICC, detailing the situation in Kashmir and urging the ICC Prosecutor's Office to intervene. Subsequently, the Prosecutor will undertake the task of collecting and documenting evidence pertaining to human

rights violations in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). The responsibility for drafting the application lies with entities such as the Attorney General's Office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Law and Justice, with a projected timeline of 1 to 6 months. Following the submission, the ICC typically requires 1 to 2 years to conduct investigations and initiate legal proceedings. Collaboration among these key stakeholders is crucial in navigating the legal complexities and procedural requirements associated with ICC jurisdiction.

## ➤ **Seeking Justice Beyond Borders: Leveraging Universal Jurisdiction for Accountability**

To pursue the avenue of invoking universal jurisdiction, Pakistan can leverage the domestic laws of various countries to bring cases against Indian citizens and corporations implicated in atrocities in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). This strategy involves a collaborative effort, wherein Pakistan can assist Kashmiri diaspora and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) based in different European and American countries to initiate legal proceedings. The identification of countries with relevant legal frameworks and fact-finding activities typically spans 1 to 6 months. Subsequently, litigation against Indian military and paramilitary personnel accused of grave war crimes and crimes against humanity in IIOJK can be initiated, with a projected timeline of 1 to 2 years. Key stakeholders involved in this process include the Attorney General's Office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Law and Justice, coordinating efforts to navigate the legal complexities and support the pursuit of justice for victims of human rights violations.

## ➤ **Racial Discrimination: Leveraging the CERD Inter-State Communication Mechanism**

The Inter-State Communication Mechanism of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) offers a platform for addressing issues related to racial discrimination between states. Notably, neither India nor Pakistan has a reservation to Article 8 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which establishes a committee capable of determining the implementation of the convention by state parties. Pakistan can utilize this mechanism provided by the convention to file a complaint against India regarding racial discrimination. This process involves a collaborative effort among the Attorney General's Office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Law and Justice. The initial phase includes gathering evidence of racial discrimination and drafting the complaint, which typically spans 6 to 12 months. Subsequently, the matter is brought before CERD, initiating an investigation process that may take 1 to 2 years to complete. Coordination among these key stakeholders is essential to effectively utilize this mechanism and address issues of racial discrimination at the international level.

## ➤ **Utilizing UNHRC Mechanisms: Addressing Human Rights Violations in IOK**

Within the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), various mechanisms exist to address human rights violations, including treaty-based bodies such as the Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, Human Rights Committee, Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination Against Women, Committee Against Torture, Committee on the Rights of the Child, Committee on Migrant Workers, and Committee on Enforced



Disappearances. Pakistan can undertake a comprehensive review of the treaties establishing these committees and draw attention to India's violations in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) through these channels. This effort requires collaboration among the Attorney General's Office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Law and Justice, and Ministry for Human Rights. The process involves conducting an analysis of treaties and preparing complaint applications, which typically takes 6 to 12 months. Subsequently, the treaty-mandated process unfolds over 1 to 2 years. Coordination among these key stakeholders is crucial to effectively utilize these mechanisms and address human rights violations perpetrated by India at the international level.

### ➤ **UNHRC Advocacy: Focusing Human Rights Violations in IOK**

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) encompasses both treaty-based and charter-based mechanisms. Among the charter-based bodies are the Human Rights Council itself, which comprises Special Procedures and Mandates, as well as the Universal Periodic Review process. As an intergovernmental body within the United Nations system, the UNHRC facilitates a dedicated complaint procedure. Pakistan can engage in a concerted effort involving the Attorney General's Office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Law and Justice, and Ministry for Human Rights to lobby at the UNHRC and garner support, a process that typically spans 6 to 12 months. Subsequently, it may take 1 to 2 years to present the matter before the Council and initiate independent investigations, which can shed light on atrocities in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and prompt further investigation by the Council's mechanisms. Collaboration among these key stakeholders is crucial to effectively utilize these mechanisms and address human rights violations within the framework of the UNHRC.



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### ➤ **Utilizing Magnitsky-Style Sanctions to Address Human Rights Violations**

The Magnitsky-Style Human Rights Sanctions are designed to target individuals and entities found responsible for human rights violations or corruption. Notably, the UK established both a global human rights sanctions regime and an anti-corruption sanctions regime in 2020, utilizing powers within the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018. Pakistan can take an active stance by identifying Indian nationals and corporations implicated in human rights abuses within Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), subsequently lodging a case before the UK Government for the imposition of sanctions against these parties. This collaborative effort involves the Attorney General's Office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Law and Justice. The process encompasses a timeline ranging from 5 to 12 months for identifying individuals and gathering evidence, followed by an additional 1 to 2 years for filing the case before the UK Government. Effective coordination among these key stakeholders is crucial to harnessing this mechanism and effectively addressing human rights violations at the international level.

### ➤ **Promoting Corporate Accountability: Utilizing OECD Guidelines**

The OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises serve as a comprehensive global framework for responsible business conduct, encompassing various areas including human rights. Countries adhering to these guidelines are mandated to establish National Contact Points (NCPs). Through these NCPs, civil society organizations, NGOs, and the Kashmiri Diaspora can lodge allegations of human rights violations by Indian businesses that have been involved in financing such violations in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). This process entails a collaborative effort among NGOs, civil society groups, and the Kashmiri Diaspora, spanning approximately 1 to 2 years to identify relevant stakeholders and present the issue before the NCPs. Effective engagement with these mechanisms is essential in holding accountable those businesses that contribute to human rights abuses and promoting responsible corporate conduct on a global scale.



## ~ Decoding India's Political Landscape ~

# Decoding India's 2024 Lok Sabha Elections: Dual Narrative of Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy Agendas



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### Counting on June 4

- Phase 1: April 19
- Phase 2: April 26
- Phase 3: May 7
- Phase 4: May 13
- Phase 5: May 20
- Phase 6: May 25
- Phase 7: June 1

The 2024 Lok Sabha elections in India, spanning seven phases from April to June, are poised to be a pivotal event in the nation's political landscape. With 969 million eligible voters set to cast their ballots across 543 constituencies, the results, slated for announcement on June 4th, hold profound implications for the country's governance.

### ○ Competing Alliances: BJP-led NDA vs. Congress-led I.N.D.I.A. Bloc

At the forefront of the electoral arena are two formidable coalitions: the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) comprising 40 parties, and the nascent Congress-led I.N.D.I.A. bloc consisting of 26 parties. The BJP, buoyed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's assertion of securing over 400 seats, faces off against the Congress, spearheading the opposition within the I.N.D.I.A. coalition.

### ○ Election Phases and Polling Dates

The electoral process unfolds across seven phases, each encompassing distinct regions of the country, with polling dates ranging from April 19th to June 1st. The multiphase approach reflects the vastness and diversity of India's electorate, spanning 21 states and engaging millions of voters.

### ○ Election Campaigns and Strategies

Manifestoes from both alliances provide insight into their respective policy priorities. The BJP emphasizes continuity, leveraging Modi's leadership to maintain popular appeal, particularly among Hindu voters. In contrast, the Congress focuses on human-centric policies, although its narrative struggles to match the resonance of the BJP's messaging.





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### ○ Key Electoral Themes and Narratives

Modi's narrative, bolstered by appeals to Hindu nationalism and promises of economic stability, finds traction among voters despite concerns over economic distress and rising unemployment. The construction of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya symbolizes Modi's efforts to restore Hindu pride, although the impact may not replicate past electoral successes achieved through communal incidents.

### ○ Impact of Local Alliances and Discord within I.N.D.I.A. Bloc

Local electoral alliances, particularly in states like West Bengal, play a crucial role in shaping electoral outcomes. While the I.N.D.I.A. alliance presents a formidable challenge to the BJP, internal discord and differing agendas within the coalition pose significant hurdles. Despite exploiting issues like economic inequality and joblessness, the alliance struggles to present a unified front against the BJP's organizational prowess.

### ○ Vision 2047 and Critique of Modi's Leadership

Modi's vision for India's future, juxtaposed against criticisms of his governance, adds complexity to the electoral landscape. While some view Modi's leadership as visionary, others, such as Indian scholar Mr. Prakala Prabhakar, critique his tenure, citing setbacks in the economy, polity, and social cohesion.

### ○ Anticipated Electoral Outcomes

As the elections unfold, the contest between the BJP-led NDA and the Congress-led I.N.D.I.A. bloc underscores the vibrancy and dynamism of India's democracy. While Modi's leadership remains a focal point, the electoral landscape is rife with complexities, alliances, and narratives that will ultimately shape the outcome on June 4th.

## Insights into Foreign Policy Discourse

Prior to the 18th Lok Sabha elections, the platforms of the two main political parties in India are being examined. Election manifesto titles can give away a lot about their contents. With its "Modi ki Guarantee" (Modi's Promise) manifesto, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is seeking to build a rapport with Indian voters by relying on Modi's promises. The goal of the Indian National Congress's (INC) "justice document," known as "Nyay Patra," is to correct the "wrongdoings" of the BJP administration. The manifestos cover an extensive range of topics and include numerous promises for India's socioeconomic prosperity. Since the two political parties have declared their intents and presented their proposed policy directions for India's international involvement, a number of aspects of Indian foreign policy have drawn special attention. Rather than focusing on how India is seen globally, the manifestos of Indian political



The diagram illustrates the structure and functions of the Government of Pakistan, organized into three main branches: Legislative, Executive, and Judiciary.

- Legislative Branch:**
  - Electoral College:** Elects the President for 5 years.
  - Rajya Sabha:** Nominates and elects the Prime Minister; controls the Council of Ministers; and can pass a no confidence vote against the Prime Minister.
  - Lok Sabha:** Nominates and elects the Prime Minister; controls the Council of Ministers; and can pass a no confidence vote against the Prime Minister.
- Executive Branch:**
  - President:** Appoints and dismisses the Prime Minister; chooses the Council of Ministers; and has supreme command over the Armed Forces.
  - Prime Minister:** Controls the Council of Ministers.
  - Council of Ministers:** Controls the State Governments and State Legislatures.
  - Armed Forces:** Under the supreme command of the President.
- Judiciary:**
  - Supreme Court:** Controls the High Courts.
  - High Courts:** Control the State Governments and State Legislatures.
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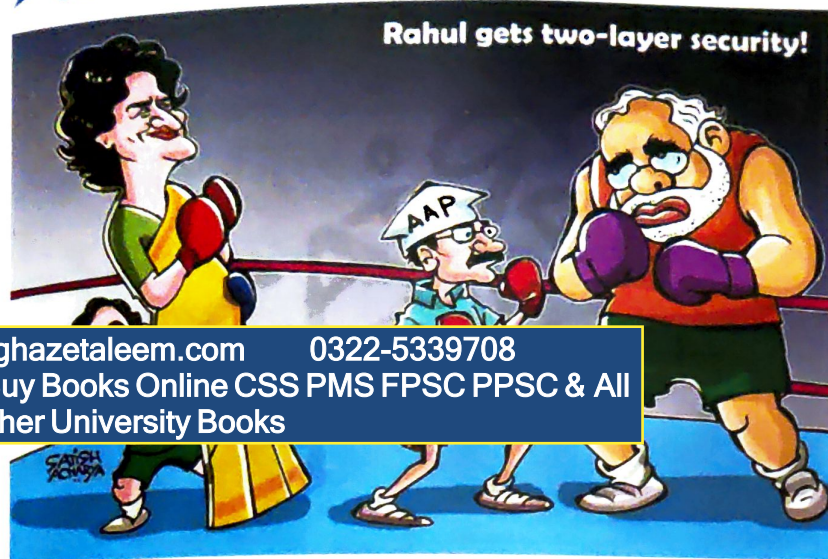
**Logos:** National Officers Academy (NOA) and National Officers Academy (NOA) logo.

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trustworthy go-between for the "Global North" and the "Global South." The BJP made this claim relatively recently, as there was no reference of "leading" the "Global South" in either the 2019 or 2014 manifestos.

### ➤ **Consistent Diplomacy: Congress's Steadfast Foreign Policy Approach**



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In contrast, it seems that the Congress has been more consistent in its manifestos for 2014, 2019, and 2024. The Congress has emphasized the importance of maintaining foreign policy since independence and has taken issue with the BJP's handling of the government's stance on the Gaza crisis. This important facet of contemporary international politics is not mentioned in the Congress manifesto, which suggests a seeming disengagement from the great-power rivalry. Nonetheless, the 2019 and 2024 manifestos clearly maintained a focus on bilateral and international interactions as well as peaceful coexistence. The Congress has also

emphasized the importance of New Delhi's collaboration with the "Global South" on matters of critical importance, following in the footsteps of the BJP. But unlike the BJP, the Congress has made it clear that it has no intention of taking on the role of leading or serving as the voice of the "Global South."

### ➤ **Congress's Domestic Pressures and China's Growing Threat Perception**

Domestic pressures have continued to be the most painful for Congress, and in that environment, China has always been seen as a threat. China was highlighted mostly in relation to border security in the Congress manifestos of 2014 and 2019, but it was added as a threat to national security in the manifesto of 2024. This worry seems to have intensified since the Congress thinks that the BJP was naive in dealing with China during the 2020 Galwan Valley issue, and that even after 21 rounds of military discussions, India's stance is still weaker than China's. In contrast to the BJP, whose foreign policy goals are expansive and include a wider range of topics, the Congress's foreign policy seems to provide a theoretical overview with a narrow focus overall. Congress's increased attention to the neighborhood may be the cause of this.

### ➤ **Congress's Neighborhood Focus: Reevaluating Cooperation Strategies**

All of India's close neighbors, including Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Bhutan, and Sri Lanka, are included in the Congress manifesto for 2024. Nevertheless, neither the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) nor the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) are mentioned, in contrast to its prior manifestos from 2014 and 2019, which supported using SAARC as a means of promoting regional cooperation. In its manifestos for 2014 and 2019, the Bharatiya Janata Party indicated a slight preference for regional collaboration. But in its 2024 platform, the BJP has also refrained from bringing up these two important regional groups.

### ➤ **Border Development Strategies: Contrasting Approaches of BJP and Congress**

The Congress's 2019 manifesto included the building of integrated, well-equipped border outposts to give the armed troops decent living and working circumstances, but the 2024 platform did not place as much emphasis on this. Congress, on the other hand, has declared that it will back border trade. The BJP's agenda doesn't seem to be too motivated. The BJP promised in its manifesto to quicken the construction of strong infrastructure along the borders with China, Pakistan, and Myanmar. The BJP's 2024 platform specifically emphasized the continued building of telecom towers, highways, tracks, and railroads, as well as the development of technology smart fences and electrical networks. The BJP's emphasis on border development really means getting ready for better mobility in the event that relations with China or Pakistan worsen. It does not necessarily equate to a desire to foster an atmosphere that is favorable for regional cooperation.

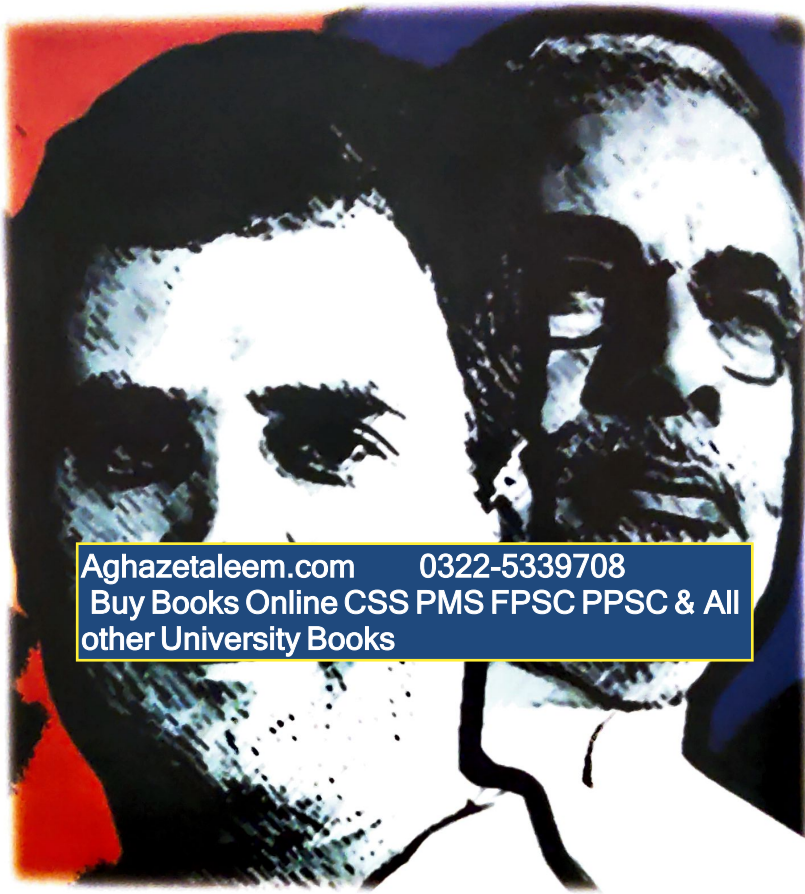


## ➤ **Military Strategies in Political Manifestos: A Prelude to Regional Tensions**

The BJP manifesto also called for the creation of military theater commands to enhance the operational effectiveness of the Indian armed forces in order to counter the challenges to national security. The creation of command theaters could operationalize the all-domain joint operations that India has been working on under the BJP leadership. The Congress has also emphasized updating the "Raksha Mantri's Operational Directive," a 2009 war-fighting policy, to address the threat of a "two-front war" with China and Pakistan. Both parties' strong stances in their manifestos are a clear illustration of the war-mongering mindset of the Indian political class, which appears to foreshadow a dire future for peace and security in the area. This indicates that neither party has any intention of being friendly to the regional states; rather, it reveals India's intentions to impose its hegemony and will on them.

## ➤ **BJP's Global Economic Ambitions: Shifting Focus to the Indo-Pacific**

The Indian Ocean and the "Indo-Pacific" region are important to the BJP, and the party's manifesto has made a point of highlighting India's "Security and Growth for All in the Region" (SAGAR) program. This indicates a change in focus from the South Asian states to the "Indo-Pacific" region. It seems that the BJP has prioritized all other parts of the world over the necessity of developing cooperative connections with the South Asian region. In addition, the BJP's manifesto calls for fortifying its influence and position in the Indian Ocean region and improving India's link to Europe through the Middle East-Europe Corridor (IMEC). The primary motivation behind this is the BJP's aim to become the world's third-largest economy and a manufacturing hub by making India a major player in the global supply chain. However, the Congress's 2024 platform makes no mention of these goals.



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## ➤ **Contrasting Approaches to Pakistan: BJP's Silence versus Congress's Engagement**

The Congress puts the onus of contact on Pakistan, while the BJP makes no mention of potential engagement. Pakistan has been referenced in the BJP manifesto in relation to building infrastructure along the border between India and Pakistan, however the Congress manifesto openly links Pakistan to "cross-border terrorism." Nonetheless, the BJP manifesto makes reference to international terrorism without specifically naming any nation.

## ➤ **Zero-Tolerance to Terrorism: BJP's Consistent Stance**

Regarding terrorism, a zero-tolerance stance was emphasized in the BJP's 2024 election agenda. A BJP manifesto for 2014 and 2019 also recommended a similar method. Without mentioning Pakistan, the BJP's 2024 election manifesto lists counterterrorism efforts undertaken by the government, including the "surgical strike" in 2016 and the airstrikes in 2019. It also notes terrorism as an internal security



issue. The emphasis of both the Congress and the BJP has been on international collaboration as opposed to regional or bilateral measures in the fight against terrorism.

### ➤ **BJP's Counterterrorism Pledge: A Closer Look at Foreign Policy Implications**

It is significant that the BJP has declared its intention to protect Indian citizens both domestically and internationally from terrorist threats. This was a reflection of the high probability that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will persist in its aggressive and unlawful campaigns to carry out extrajudicial assassinations and state-sponsored terrorism on foreign land, with the United States, Canada, and Pakistan being the current targets. The majority of these deaths in Pakistan have been connected to the struggle of individuals in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) for their right to self-determination. Articles 370 and 35A of the Indian Constitution were abolished by the BJP administration in August 2019, transforming Jammu and Kashmir from a disputed area into a union territory and strengthening central government authority. According to the BJP manifesto, this action lessened violence in the disputed area. Its manifesto included no mention of taking any additional action pertaining to the disputed region, which served to minimize the actual state of affairs there. On the other hand, the BJP government has long raised the issue of Jammu and Kashmir's "statehood," which the Congress promised to reinstate.

### ➤ **Stagnant Relations: India-Pakistan Ties in Political Manifestos**

Overall, neither of the two Indian political parties' manifestos has shown a particular desire to strengthen ties with Pakistan. Trade with neighbors was addressed in the Congress manifesto, however trade with Pakistan was not specifically highlighted. It is apparent that the Indian political elite considers cooperation with Islamabad to be unsatisfactory. The parties' manifestos neglect to mention that the area will continue to be engulfed in severe instability that may quickly go out of control if long-standing India-Pakistan disputes are not resolved.



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### ➤ **Divergent Paths: Contrasting Visions in Political Manifestos**

In conclusion, the BJP's manifesto calls for broad, long-term growth and development plans that will position India for a greater role in the world economy. Congress, on the other hand, has continued to prioritize short-term and local objectives. Regarding their approaches to foreign affairs, the two political parties aim to achieve different things. The 2024 manifestos of both political parties show little interest in regionalism and cooperation, which is not good news for the future of relations between India and Pakistan or for the peace and prosperity of the region. All things considered, the manifestos make enormous promises to the Indian populace. How they will be able to keep such pledges is still up in the air.



## Technological Tensions: Unseen Fallout of US-China Conflict

# US-China Tech War: Blueprint of Future of Great Game ~ ~ New Fronts, Old Confrontations

Wildfires in California and Oregon in the summer of 2020 showed an unintended effect of the war between the US and China. The Trump administration's ban on Chinese-made drones, especially DJI drones, and the end of buying American high-tech systems like Ignis made it harder to fight fires. This move, which was caused by worries about spying and weak technology, shows how tense things are around China's rise in general. The U.S. has had problems with China for a long time because it thinks China is breaking the law, especially with its state-led economic strategy, which includes economic espionage and joint partnerships that steal foreign technology. Limits have been put in place because people are afraid that Chinese companies, even big tech companies, could hurt national security by secretly gathering information. Concerns about 5G infrastructure and data protection, as well as drones, are some of the things that the U.S. government has banned from coming from China. Some say these worries are just ideas, but others are afraid of possible weak spots that could hurt national infrastructure in the event of a direct military clash between the US and China. The effects of this technology cold war that we can't see have big effects, like how they affect firefighting and maybe even on the bigger picture of world politics.



### ➤ Innovation Battleground: Contrasting Paths of the West and China

The BBC called Huawei "essentially dead" earlier this year, indicating that the company was on its way out. Huawei was once the second-largest smartphone maker in the world. But the electronics giant surprised everyone by coming back in August with the Mate 60 Pro, a top phone that came with the advanced Kirin 9000S chip from China's Semiconductor Manufacturing International Corporation (SMIC). Even though Washington-led sanctions were meant to slow down China's technological growth,



this event showed that China could still stand its ground. The U.S. is leading the global tech war, which aims to stop Beijing from making progress by making it harder for them to get access to key technologies. The fact that SMIC jumped to the 7-nanometer range despite being punished calls these methods into question. But the story that China is quickly catching up in technology is too simple. China is putting a lot of money into becoming a science and technology superpower, but the West has fundamental benefits because it has strong democracies that encourage new ideas. China's method is more centralized, while the West's model is more decentralized, experimental, and liberal democratic. This makes innovation possible. China's growing tech hub, Shenzhen, shows how innovative the country is, but the long-term outcome of the fight for tech supremacy is still unknown. Beijing is set up for the long game because it sees technology as a geopolitical problem and has always been able to see things far into the future. Even with these changes, the rivalry between the US and China has huge effects on the rest of the world. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) says that the competition between superpowers will break up the world, which will hurt the economy, destroy millions of jobs, and stop growth and have to deal with more misery in a broken and poor global environment.

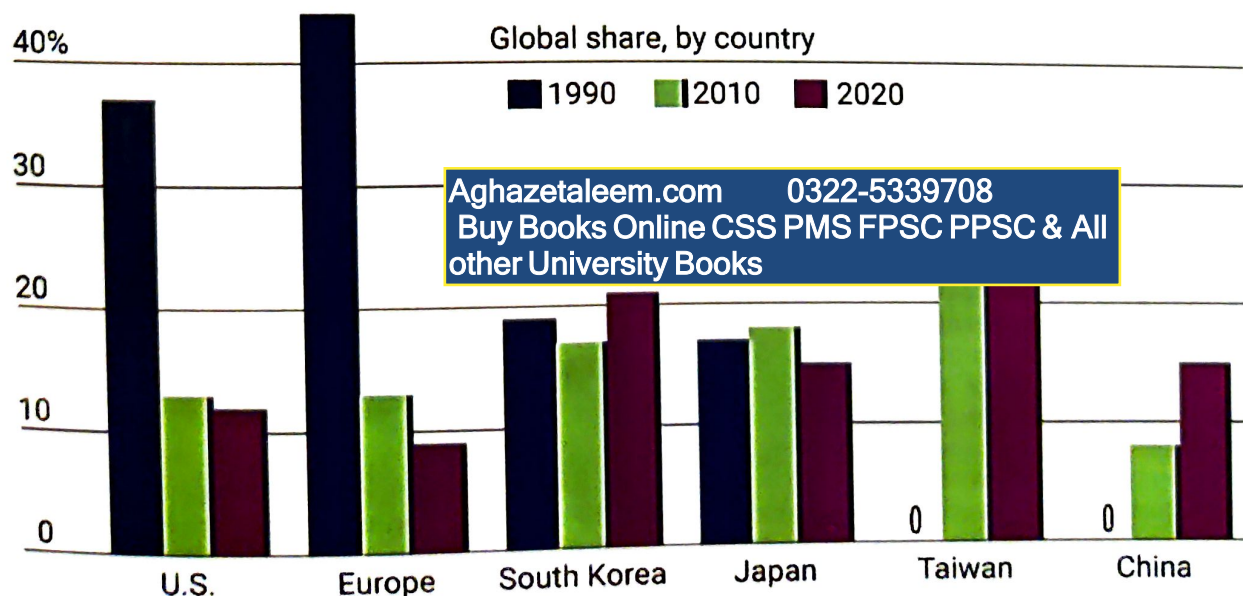
### ➤ U.S.-China Chip War: Taiwan's Crucial Role in the Battle

The Taiwanese presidential election on January 13 is expected to have big effects on the world. It could change the status quo in 2024 and have an effect on the S&P 500. The election results are expected to affect Beijing's stance. If a candidate supports closer ties, Beijing might take a more diplomatic stance. On the other hand, if the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party wins, Beijing might take a more hostile attitude. There is more risk in President Biden's geopolitical plan to protect America's technology and military edge, especially since Taiwan is so important to making advanced chips. The chip war between the US and China is a major battleground. Beijing sees it as both harmful and a direct threat to its security. The fight over who will run the future data centers on Taiwan, an island that China sees as an outlaw region and that the US defends. This shows how determined both sides are to change the course of the world's most important technology. Even though the U.S. has tried to limit China's technological goals by limiting exports more strictly in October, problems still exist, as shown by Huawei's announcement of a 5G smartphone with a very advanced chip. It's still not clear how well the Biden administration's plan to stop advanced microchip technology from getting to China will work.

### ➤ Taiwan Semiconductor's 'Silicon Shield'

Rhodium Group says that a possible Chinese blockade of Taiwan could stop more than \$2 trillion worth of economic activity, even if the situation doesn't get worse and turn into a military clash. The main effect would come from cutting off the main source of advanced semiconductors from supply lines

## Semiconductor Manufacturing Capacity



Source: Boston Consulting Group



around the world. Taiwan Semiconductor makes a lot of things, like smartphone chipsets, auto microcontrollers, and high-end graphics processing units. These products bring in \$1.6 trillion a year for buyers around the world. China has big plans for the future, like the Made in China 2025 plan, but its own chip production can't meet all of its needs right now. Relying on Taiwan's chip production has been a very important defense against China's territorial goals. Even if Beijing quickly took over TSMC, it would have a big effect on China's and the world's economies, as it could mess up important manufacturing processes and supply lines.

### ➤ China's Accelerated Timeline for Invading Taiwan

In the past few years, the U.S. military and intelligence agencies have found signs that President Xi was leading efforts to get China's military ready to take over Taiwan by 2027. But Secretary of State Anthony Blinken and others have expressed worries, pointing out that China seems to want to reunite the country much more quickly than before. A January memo showed that Air Force Gen. Mike Minihan thought there might be a war in 2025, and in October 2022, Admiral Michael Gilday, who was head of naval operations at the time, talked about a possible "2023 window" for an invasion. Beijing might want to take advantage of the fact that the U.S. military isn't ready for battle right now because it is helping Ukraine fight off Russian control. In June, a task force from the Council on Foreign Relations said that the conflict in Ukraine was important from a strategic point of view, but it also said that the U.S. needed to improve its defense industrial base right away to get ready for a high-intensity war with China.

### ➤ Pentagon Expands Operations to Counteract China's Ambitions

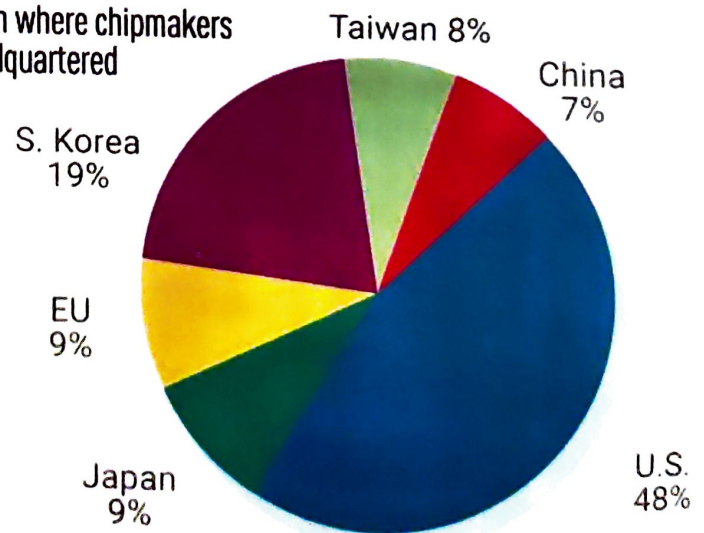
The Pentagon is now making 28,000 more gun shells every month, but they want to make 100,000 by 2025, which is more than Ukraine needs right now. The chip war between the US and China makes Beijing feel even more compelled to take over Taiwan, putting military action ahead of economic worries. It's getting harder for China to use TSMC's advanced chip manufacturing, which makes the "silicon shield" less of a barrier. The longer China doesn't have access to cutting-edge technology, the more likely it is that the U.S. military will be able to counter Beijing's strengths. The Pentagon announced the Replicator program in August, which will use AI-powered autonomous combat drones to counter China's mass advantage. This is a change in military policy.

### ➤ Critical Juncture in the U.S.-China Chip War

When Jake Sullivan, the National Security Advisor, announced that the U.S.-China chip war would get worse in September 2022, he said that this was different from the past strategy of staying "only a couple of generations ahead" of geopolitical foes. Because Beijing is committed to spending almost infinite resources in becoming a leader in technologies that act as "force multipliers," Sullivan said, the new strategic environment required keeping a large lead. After that, the U.S. put in place strict export controls to stop China's chip growth at key points. These controls include not letting China buy advanced AI chips and limiting their access to software for designing and making chips. These rules set a base level for chip equipment exports that goes beyond what China's biggest chipmaker, SMIC, can do with 14-nanometer production as early as 2019. Taiwan Semiconductor, on the other hand, reached a major milestone when it started mass production of its 3-nanometer technology. China could fall even further behind as the semiconductor industry moves toward smaller circuits for faster and more power-efficient chips.

### Semiconductor Market Share, 2022

Based on where chipmakers are headquartered



Source: Semiconductor Industry Association



## ➤ Apple Faces Setback as U.S. Export Controls Fall Short

Almost a year after the U.S. put in place broad restrictions, China has sent out a strong reminder of those limits. Dylan Patel of SemiAnalysis said that the Huawei Mate 60 Pro, which has a 7-nanometer chip from SMIC, shows how weak U.S. export controls are thought to be. Patel says that both U.S. and foreign chip equipment makers are helping to make 7-nm chips even though they are supposed to be making gear for 28-nm production. Patel thinks that Huawei and SMIC could be making 5-nm chips by 2025 or 2026 if nothing major changes. This could lead to a lot of AI chips being made. Even though stopping China's semiconductor industry is possible, Patel says that a stronger method is needed, more than the current "half measures" and more like a "full-scale assault."

## ➤ Export Restrictions Specifically Aimed at Nvidia



Patel pointed out on November 9 that the Biden administration's recent efforts to tighten export rules seem to have some holes. Even though tight measures were expected, Nvidia has still found ways to get around the rules. Key businesses that make chip equipment have said that they will continue to sell a lot of products to China. ASML depends a lot on China; 46% of its most recent quarter's sales

came from there. The company said that the new export controls would only affect about 10% to 15% of its shipments. On earnings calls, companies that make chips and tools stressed how important it was to keep sales to China, which is a big customer, from dropping too much. Some say that Chinese sales help pay for research and development, which is very important for U.S. and partner semiconductor industry leaders to stay ahead. Others, though, say that China might soon be able to make its own chips, and they name six Chinese companies that are ready to make chips like Nvidia's A100.

## ➤ China's Dilemma: Balancing Economy and Taiwan

As U.S. export controls continue to lose their usefulness, Beijing may not see the invasion of Taiwan as important, even if it costs a lot of money. China is facing economic problems like slow growth and the effects of relying too much on building homes and building roads and bridges, but the choice might not be based only on economic factors. If there is a possible economic downturn and the US is trying hard to keep China's economy from growing too fast, President Xi Jinping might become more aggressive. Xi has always said that reunification with Taiwan is important for China's recovery. Since October, he has changed his tone from a faraway hope to a firm promise: "Reunification definitely must be achieved, and reunification definitely will be achieved." For Xi, the race to be the world's leader in technology is just as important as the race to make China's economy and defense strong. There is a complex link between these two goals.

## ➤ Beijing's Progress in Military Technology

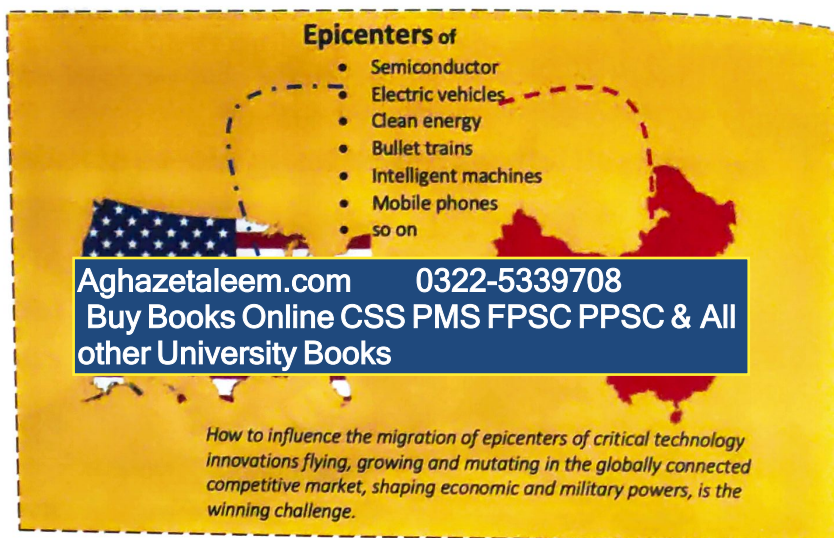
China is working hard to make its own armies of military drones. A report from last year says that the Defense Intelligence Agency raised concerns about how quickly China's satellite program and jamming powers were growing. This could make it harder for the US to target its enemies. In addition, China is known for making progress in hypersonic weapons that can get past missile systems. The likelihood of a war over Taiwan is still unknown, but China is in a better position geographically. The Council on Foreign Relations says that only two U.S. air bases are strategically placed close enough for fighter jets to fly between them without stopping to refuel. They also say that these bases are "highly vulnerable to



Chinese missile attacks." Who would back Taiwan in a fight like this is a very important question. The United States does not officially support Taiwan's independence, but it is sending arms to Taiwan and President Biden has promised to protect it if it is attacked. Even though they aren't making the same promise, other partners are also working hard to stop China.

### ➤ Taiwan Semiconductor's Growth in Arizona

There is no doubt that the time when the US relied greatly on Taiwan to make its most valuable semiconductors needs to end soon. Morris Chang started TSMC in 1987 with help from the Taiwanese government. At that time, the U.S. semiconductor business made more than three times as many chips as it does now (12%). At that time, there wasn't a lot of talk about "fabless" semiconductor companies that created and sold chips but hired other companies to make them. Chang, on the other hand, thought that new ideas would grow if companies could hire a foundry to make chips for them. So, he started TSMC, which drew in big names like Nvidia, Marvell Technology, Broadcom, Qualcomm, and later Apple, which started making its own iPhone chips in 2009. TSMC used its growing business to improve its manufacturing methods all the time, which gave it an even bigger edge over its competitors. Taiwan Semiconductor has started building the first of two chip factories in Arizona. This is possible thanks to the \$52 billion Chips and Science Act. Bringing TSMC's advanced manufacturing to the U.S. is proving to be much harder than expected. High-volume production was supposed to start in 2024. The company put off building the ramp until 2025 in July, saying they couldn't find enough skilled workers. TSMC's growth in Japan, on the other hand, is smoother, and the country is getting big subsidies to get back to being a leader in chipmaking. The first factory in Japan will start making things at the end of next year, and TSMC is thinking about opening a third factory in the area. The United States, Japan, and South Korea signed a defense pact in August. This agreement increased joint training drills and set up a crisis hotline. In the South China Sea, the US, Australia, Japan, and the Philippines all held joint naval drills at the same time.



○ There is more pressure on the Biden administration to regulate RISC-V chip technology because of the US-China tech war.

As the tech war between the US and China gets worse, politicians like Senators Marco Rubio (R) and Mark Warner (D) are asking the Biden administration to stop American companies from working together on RISC-V, an open-source chip technology that is widely used in China. Arm Holdings has its own proprietary technology that fights with RISC-V. RISC-V is an important part of many things, from smartphone chips to AI processors. The politicians say they are worried about national security and say that Beijing takes advantage of the fact that American companies can work together freely to help its semiconductor industry grow. This could hurt the US's position as a leader in chip technology and help China modernize its military. Representative Mike Gallagher, who is the head of the House Select Committee on China, wants the Commerce Department to require American companies working with groups in the People's Republic of China (PRC) on RISC-V technology to get export licenses. The move is a big attempt to limit the participation of US companies in RISC-V. It is the latest development in the larger fight between the US and China over chip technology. Representative Michael McCaul, who is the chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, says that China is misusing RISC-V to get around the fact that the US has more patents on chips than any other country. McCaul wants the Bureau of Industry and Security to do something and is threatening to pass laws if they don't. The Commerce Department says it is always looking at the fields of technology and threats and stresses the need to follow export control rules to keep the country safe. Lawmakers say that Communist China is getting around penalties by using open-source chip architecture like RISC-V. This has led to calls for tighter



controls on exports. The nonprofit organization in Switzerland is in charge of the technology, which came from the University of California, Berkeley, with help from the Pentagon. Executives from Huawei in China are interested in RISC-V, and so are companies like Qualcomm and Google, which are friends of the US. If the Biden administration listens to calls to limit US companies' involvement in the foundation that oversees RISC-V, it could make it harder for US and Chinese companies to work together on technical standards. This could hurt efforts to make chips that can do everything and hinder global efforts to make flexible chips. Such rules have effects on more than just real goods. Experts worry that they could stop people from working together and coming up with new ideas. Jack Kang of SiFive says it will be a "terrible tragedy" and compares it to not being able to do work on the internet. Open talks about technology aren't usually regulated, but rules that are already in place for chip exports could be used as a legal basis for such ideas.

o The Meeting between President Xi Jinping and President Joe Biden broke the ice.



The recent summit in San Francisco between President Xi Jinping and President Joe Biden, which was part of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, was meant to improve ties between the two countries. Even though the problems won't be solved right away, experts expect "significant global

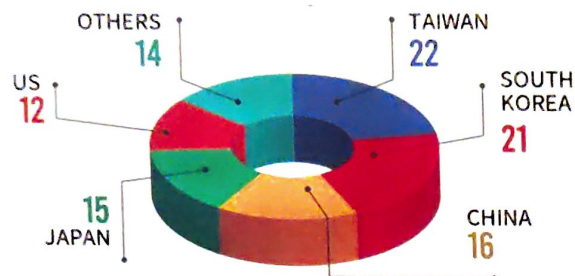
consequences," taking into account how the world's two biggest economies affect trade between countries. China's foreign ministry said that the summit not only dealt with immediate problems but also set up a plan for the long-term growth of bilateral ties. This was similar to what Kristalina Georgieva, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), said about the need for more cooperation around the world. The leaders talked about a lot of different problems during the four-hour meeting, which shows how dangerous the world is right now. The meeting is important because it could help solve problems on a global scale and stop things from getting worse. The summit is very important because the partnership between the US and China affects more than 40% of the world's goods and services. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) says that higher trade hurdles could cut the world's output by \$7.4 trillion. The IMF chief said that the APEC meeting showed how the warming of relations between the U.S. and China has improved cooperation around the world. The leaders had their first face-to-face meeting in a year and talked about a lot of different topics. They agreed to open a presidential hotline, start military contacts again, work together on artificial intelligence, and stop the production of fentanyl. Their diplomatic ties have taken a positive step forward with this real progress.

Wang Yi, China's foreign minister, called the meeting a turning point and stressed the need for a new beginning and a new vision for a healthy, stable, and long-lasting relationship. More than 20 topics were agreed upon, which set the stage for future discussions. Xi Jinping stressed how important the relationship between the U.S. and China is for global security. He talked about the need for shared understanding, good conflict resolution, cooperation that benefits both sides, and exchanges between people. Xi said that the world is big enough for both countries to live together, and that shutting down talks is not a choice. Even though there were signs of a thaw before the meeting, some people are warning against being too optimistic, pointing out that each country is different. Stabilizing ties through the summit is very important for re-engagement and promoting a positive view of China's growth as a force for global growth. The meeting between Xi and Biden was a major strategic breakthrough that gives people hope for better ties and global cooperation. Both leaders understood how important it was to be involved on the international stage.

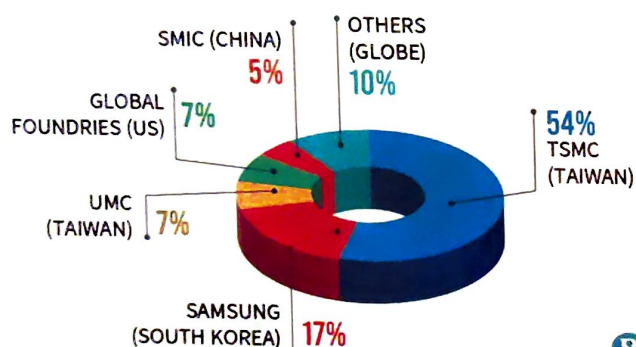


## ➤ Rivalry between the US and China: Pakistan's strategic dilemma

### WORLD'S TOP SEMICONDUCTOR PRODUCERS



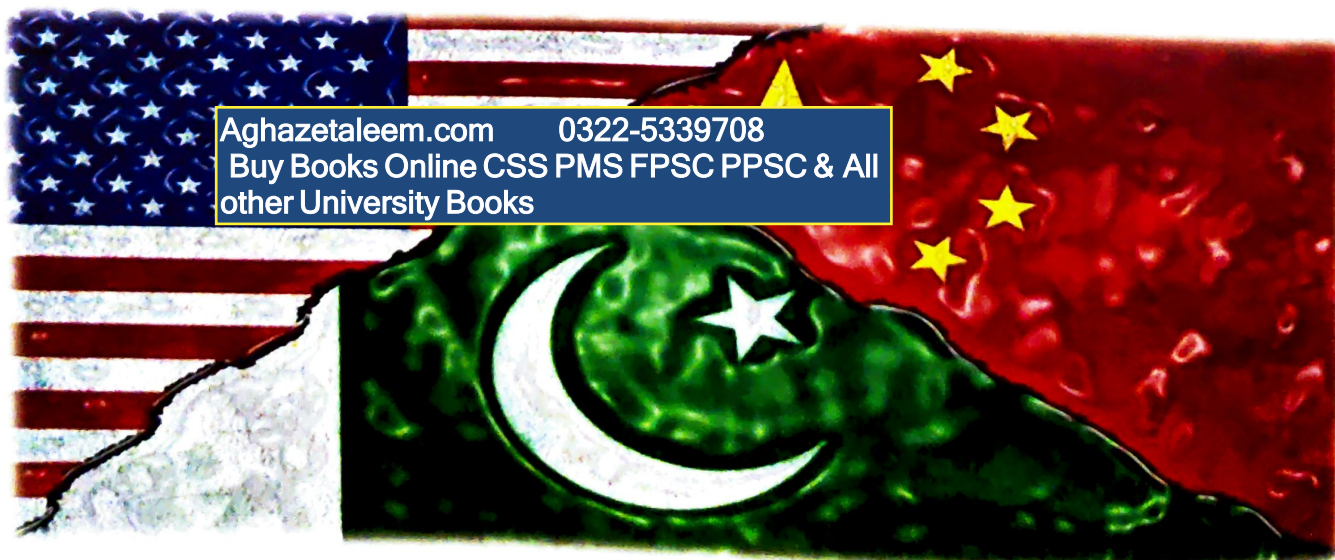
### SEMICONDUCTOR COMPANIES BY MARKET SHARE



Pakistan, like many other countries, is worried about how the growing conflict between the US and China might affect ties between the two countries. The current situation is very different from past competitions between great powers, making comparisons like "a new Cold War" difficult. The factors include a world order that is changing because of tensions between the US and China, Russia's determination, Europe's desire for independence, and the goals of middle powers. Pakistan is especially at risk in this changing world because it doesn't have the power to change the global environment but is still sensitive to its changes. The main thing that worries Pakistan is the competition between the US and China, which has economic, technical, and military aspects.

The US wants to keep its technical and military edge by doing things like limiting the export of advanced semiconductors to China. In order to protect national security without cutting off all trade links, Washington wants to make sure that economic competition is fair. Geopolitical alliances like AUKUS and the QUAD are part of the competition. They are meant to balance out China's economic power with military strength. Pakistan needs to find a good mix between its strategic relationship with China and its need for the US as an important economic partner and

security provider. China is important from a military point of view, but the US is still important even though it has a history of not being reliable. Two countries are thinking about Pakistan because it could help keep the area safe or get in the way of geopolitical competition. Things might be different, though, if the economic balance tips heavily in China's direction. If the battle between the US and China gets tougher, Pakistan might feel like it has to pick a side. Pakistan's strength on the inside is the key, which makes it necessary for both countries. Pakistan could be forced to choose between the US and China if it is weak, which shows how important it is to strengthen its own borders to protect its own interests in a complicated world of politics.



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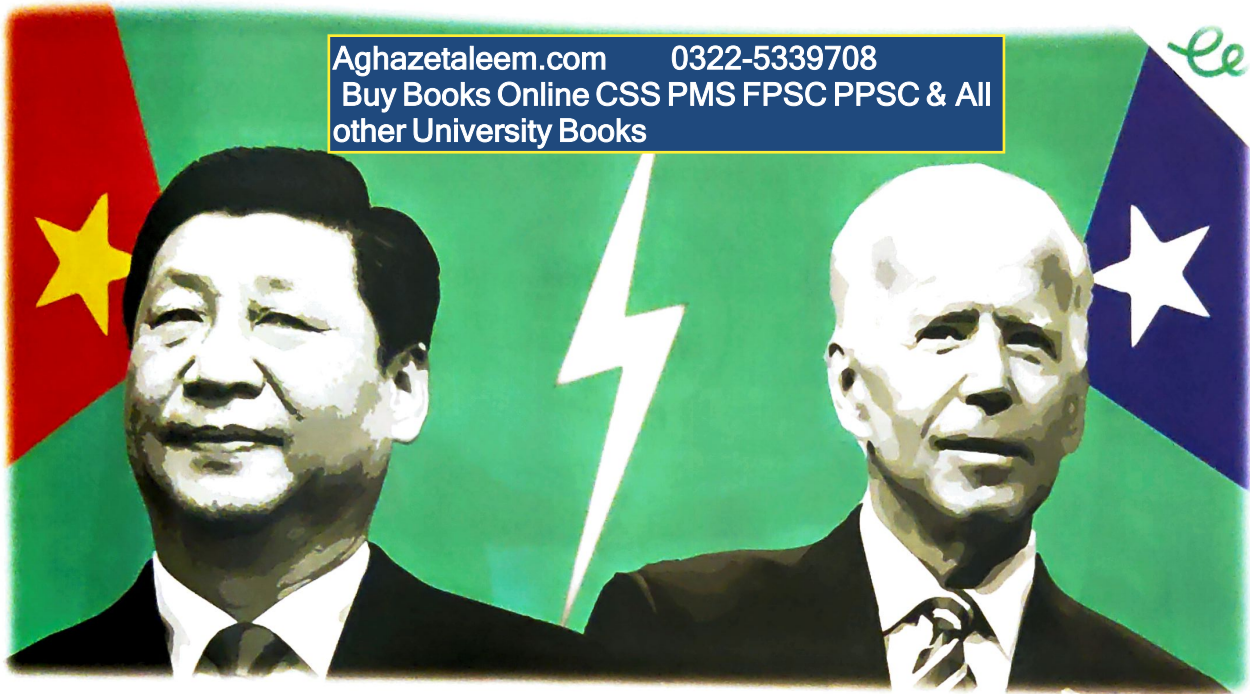


~ ~ ~ Contradictory Consensus ~ ~ ~

# Harmonious Dissonance:

## Biden-Xi Phone Call Sparks Hope Amidst Discord

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### ➤ Bridging the Gulf: Biden-Xi Phone Call

Regarding China-U.S. relations, President Joe Biden and Xi Jinping spoke via telephone on April 2. It was the first high-level conversation between the two presidents since November 2023, when they met in San Francisco for the Woodside Summit, and the first via telephone since 2022. In addition to regional peace, military-to-military communication, counternarcotics, confronting climate change, AI risks, and people-to-people relations, both parties reached a consensus to maintain cooperation in these areas. On both parties, trade and technological competition continued to be points of contention. The call occurred in the midst of several de-escalation-indicating actions.

### ➤ Clashing Narratives: White House vs. Beijing Readouts

The divergence in the accounts provided by the White House and China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the dialogue between the two presidents was substantial. The Chinese interpretation has been more extensive, featuring phrases such as the frequently referenced "San Francisco vision" and President Xi Jinping likening the public's perception of China-U.S. relations to the initial button of a garment that necessitates correction. The Chinese transmission underscored the significance of credibility, peace, and stability, reaffirmed the United States' dedication to the "One China Policy," and voiced opposition to the imposition of sanctions on Chinese entities. In regards to the high-tech industry, Chinese remarks were especially acerbic; President Xi Jinping declared that "China will not tolerate the United States' obstruction of China's progress."

### ➤ American Concerns: Preserving Peace and Security?

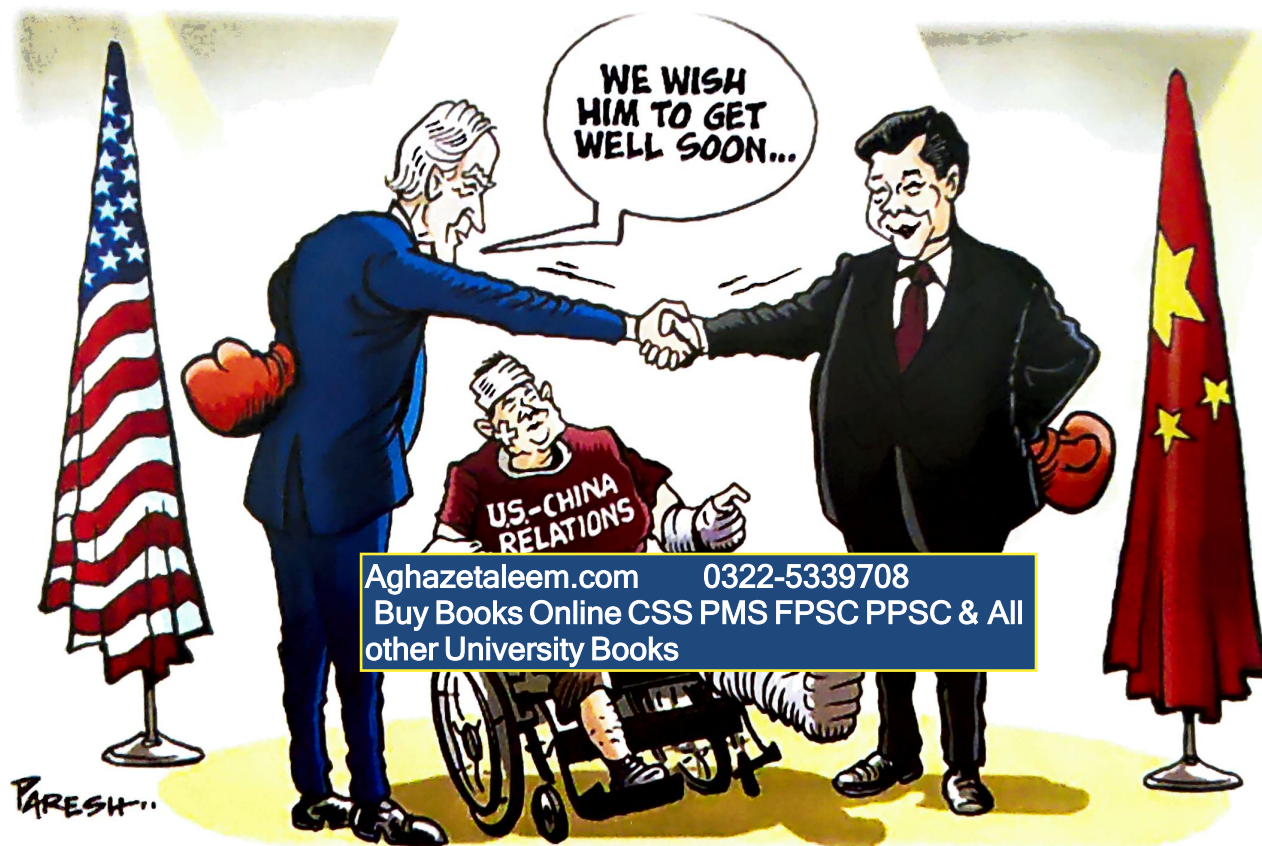
The American readout was comparatively brief and expressed American apprehensions regarding China. Its primary objectives were the preservation of stability and peace across the Taiwan Strait, as well as



the protection of the rule of law and freedom of navigation in the South China Sea. In addition, President Joe Biden expressed apprehensions regarding China's assistance to the Russian defense sector, reaffirmed the United States' dedication to the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, and voiced reservations regarding China's trade policies. Reiterating the newly introduced "de-risking" concept, he further emphasized that the United States must "continue to take necessary actions to prevent advanced U.S. technologies from being used to undermine our national security."

### ➤ Taiwan Gesture: A Symbolic Move

It is noteworthy that the White House readout abstained from any reference to the One-China Policy or assurances regarding Taiwan, in contrast to the Chinese readout. Nevertheless, the Chinese remark concerning Taiwan was not devoid of merit. The day before the contact, the Taiwanese military declared the cancellation of live-fire exercises near the islands of Quemoy and Kinmin, which are in close proximity to the mainland of China, on the grounds of inclement weather. China recently criticized, among other measures, the execution of quemoy exercises, which it deemed to be a deliberate provocation. Later, a Taipei-based newspaper cited the Taiwan military command as saying that "avoid provocation" was one of the reasons for deferring exercises.



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### ➤ Diplomatic Dialogues: Navigating Complexity

The week prior, several meetings were also attended by senior Chinese leadership, which pertained to matters of "low politics." A delegation of twenty U.S. business leaders, including the CEOs of semiconductor manufacturer Qualcomm, delivery services provider FedEx, and equity firm Blackstone, met with President Xi Jinping and three ministers on March 27. Graham Allison, the renowned Harvard professor and former Assistant Secretary of Defense to President Bill Clinton, was introduced to Foreign Minister Wang Yi. Allison, who was present at the March 27 meeting with Xi Jinping, reflected on Xi's remark regarding China-U.S. relations, "I am in you, and you are in me." In response, Xi stated that "exchange, cooperation, and ultimately accommodation" constitute the path forward for nations that are intricately interconnected. The dialogues between Allison and China's highest leadership exhibited a favorable tone, especially from the renowned scholar whose research on Thucydides' Trap has frequently been referenced to rationalize the escalation of the United States-China rivalry.



## ➤ Challenges Ahead: Navigating Tensions

An additional sign of relations beginning to thaw at the time of the Biden-Xi call was academic dialogue between the two countries' preeminent think institutes. The Center for China and Globalization (CCG) also hosted a book launch for "Escaping Thucydides Trap: Dialogue with Graham Allison on China-U.S. Relations," which occurred before Allison's engagement with Chinese political leadership. The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), a prominent U.S. think tank, released the report on March 27. The report, which summarized a collaborative two-year effort with Peking University, was titled "U.S.-China Scholarly Recoupling: Advancing Mutual Understanding in an Era of Intense Rivalry." Spectators, who have adopted generally hawkish stances in recent years, have interpreted these occurrences as encouraging signs of progress toward thawing relations.

## ➤ Charting the Course: Towards Understanding

Positive indicators notwithstanding, much appears to continue to paint a dismal picture. The domestic political climate in the United States, which is progressively becoming more reliant on anti-China discourse, comes first. This is additionally substantiated by public opinion surveys conducted in the United States regarding China. An estimated 83 percent of American adults hold a negative perception of China, per a Pew survey. 58% of Americans, according to another survey, consider China to be a critical threat to the United States. Moreover, trade and high-tech competition are poised to escalate further as a source of contention. Further supporting the exchange during the Biden-Xi call, this fact was recently reflected in an interview with Intel CEO Patrick Gelsinger, who stated that "national security and the economic engine" are his primary investors while downplaying \$7 billion in losses incurred by Intel as a cost of maintaining technological supremacy. In addition, the President of the United States allocated \$19.5 billion of the \$52.7 billion in subsidies designated for the semiconductor industry to Intel in an effort to increase the company's manufacturing capacity, which has decreased globally from 40% in the 1990s to approximately 12% in recent years. The transition in production is accompanied by United States regulations prohibiting both domestic and international firms from supplying manufacturing equipment to China.

## ➤ Bottom line for [potential] conflict?

Notwithstanding the optimistic rhetoric and apparent amicability surrounding the Biden-Xi call, significant challenges continue to exist between the two nations. Despite occasional concessions by the United States regarding Taiwan and indications of collaborative messaging in recent academic and scholastic exchanges, it is not reasonable to anticipate a reduction in the fervent criticism directed towards China in the near future. The trade balance and competition for high-tech products will exacerbate this situation. Dean Wang Jisi of Peking University puts it another way: in the end, these types of exchanges may assist in "elucidating the upper limit of the development of bilateral relations and the bottom line for [potential] conflict."



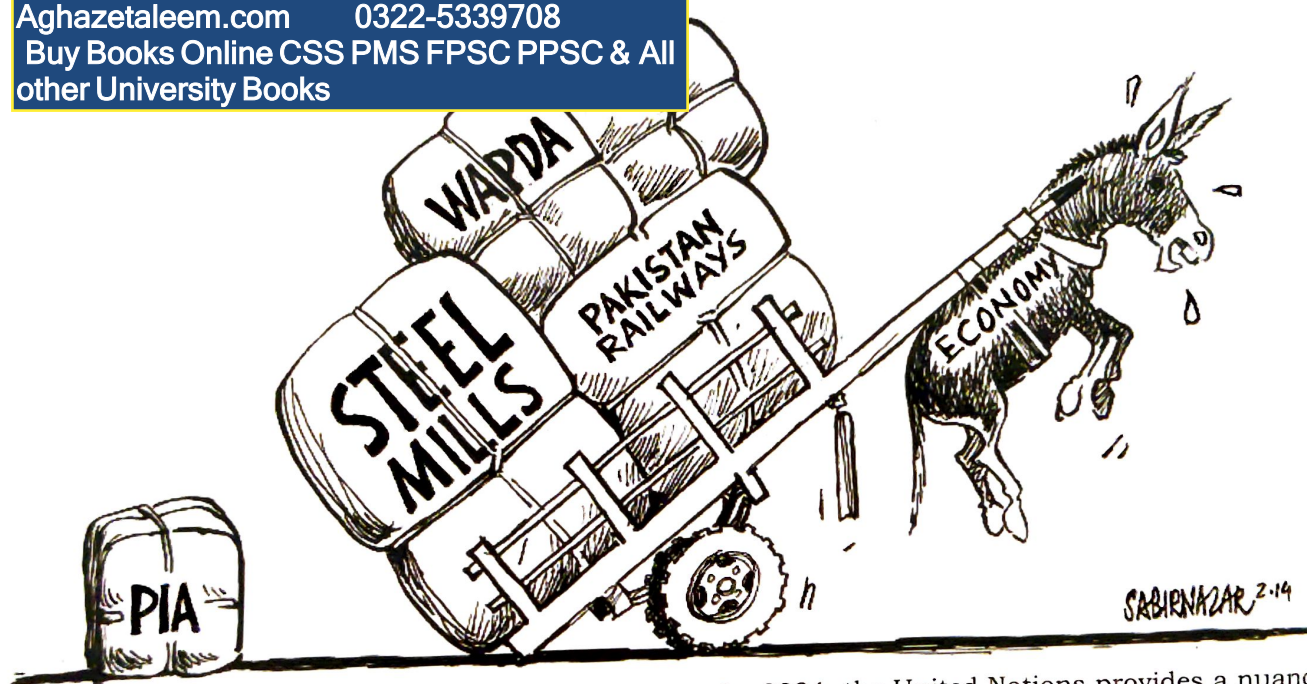
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## Insights from the United Nations' 2024 Report

# Economic Landscape of Pakistan: Challenges, Strategies & Path to Recovery

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In its World Economic Situation and Prospects report for 2024, the United Nations provides a nuanced assessment of Pakistan's economic trajectory, forecasting a moderate two percent growth in gross domestic product (GDP) in 2024, followed by a marginal improvement to 2.4 percent in 2025. Nevertheless, among these forecasts are alarming signs. Although the worldwide economy experienced a strong recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic last year, resulting in increased GDP, structural vulnerabilities and fundamental risks continue to exist in the global economy. Major South Asian economies, such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India, are classified as lower-middle-income countries in the report. Nevertheless, the region continues to face obstacles, most notably in the area of agricultural security. Bangladesh and Pakistan experienced a rise in the number of individuals experiencing severe food insecurity in 2023, in contrast to Sri Lanka, where the situation improved. Afghanistan continues to experience the greatest impact, as 46% of its populace is confronted with severe food insecurity. As the report investigates Pakistan's economy in greater detail, alarming statistics emerge. As a consequence of the precipitous surge in inflation to 39.18 percent in 2023, the State Bank of Pakistan has sustained an unprecedented policy rate of 22 percent since June 2023. Furthermore, during the same year, Pakistan encountered a currency depreciation exceeding 20 percent. In addition, Pakistan is confronted with a substantial sovereign debt and a debt-servicing burden that is not sustainable. In 2023, the proportion of external debt to the nation's nominal GDP was 36.5%, a significant rise from the preceding year. In 2022, the debt-to-GDP ratio of the government peaked at 89 percent, underscoring the formidable nature of fiscal management. A comprehensive indicator of real effective exchange rates, they decreased from 88.0 percent in 2022 to 72 percent in 2023, reflecting the economic difficulties in Pakistan. In summary, the World Economic Situation and Prospects report for 2024 published by the United Nations offers a comprehensive assessment of the economic environment in Pakistan. It contrasts optimistic development forecasts with an array of obstacles, such as inflationary forces, devaluation of the national currency, and substantial sovereign debt.



### ➤ Pakistan's Challenging Quest: Political and Economic Uncertainty

## NOA's Contemporary World

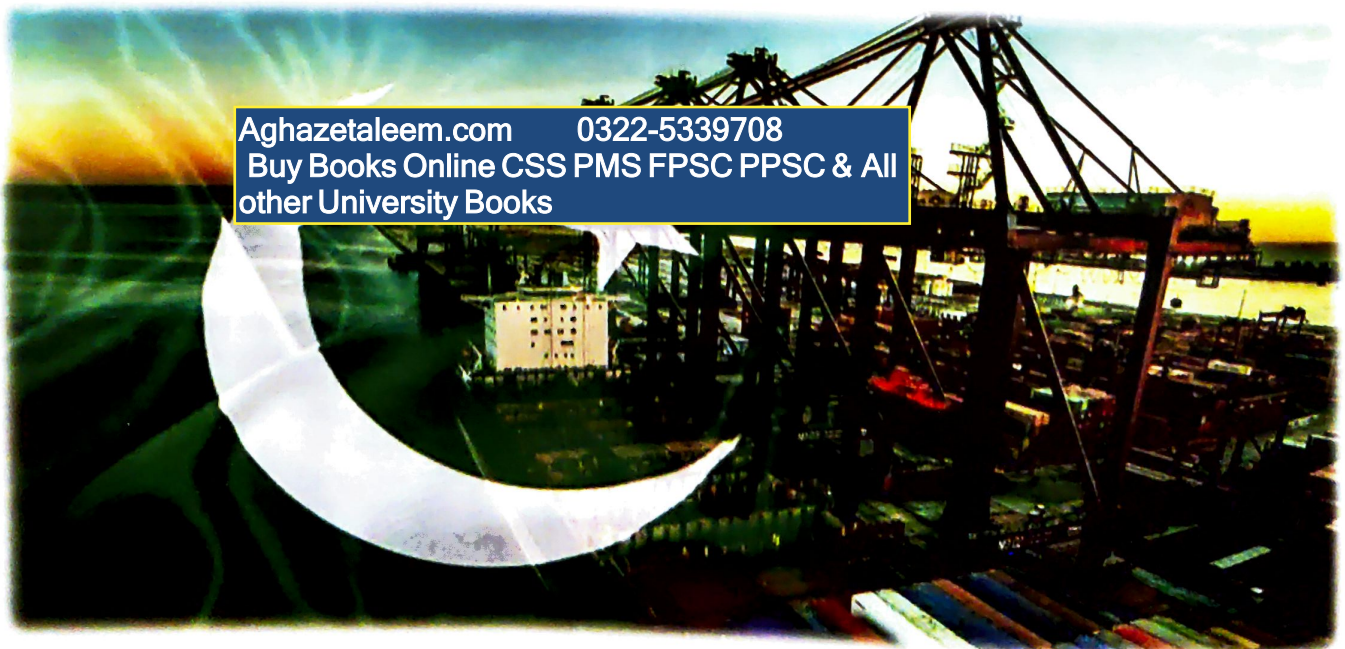


economy and the IMF agreement. Prior to the 2024 elections, Nawaz Sharif's return to power was highly anticipated; however, the result surprised forecasters. The absence of a parliamentary majority for any political party rendered the formation of a coalition government unavoidable, thereby inducing an unparalleled period of political and economic instability in Pakistan.

### ➤ **Strategy for Stability and Growth in Pakistan's Economic Reform**

Following a substantial phase of uninterrupted poverty rate reduction, Pakistan is presently grappling with one of its most severe economic crises. A sequence of calamities—including the Covid-19 pandemic, the calamitous floods of 2022, and unfavorable global conditions—has further exacerbated inadequate policy choices, leading to decelerated economic expansion, escalated poverty, and a precarious predicament with regard to debt repayment. Indicators of human development continue to lag behind levels comparable to those of considerably impoverished countries, and the growth of per capita income has slowed as a result of low productivity and high fertility rates. These obstacles require long-lasting and comprehensive reforms. A considerable number of nations have successfully managed to recover from comparable crises by means of resolute measures. This crisis provides Pakistan with a chance to confront enduring structural challenges that have for too long impeded the nation's progress. Pakistan must initially address the predicament of human capital scarcity. The nation is confronted with an alarming infant mortality rate, wherein seven percent of children perish prior to attaining the age of five; this percentage is considerably elevated in comparison to similar countries. Additionally, in economically disadvantaged areas, the prevalence of impaired growth among children under the age of five exceeds fifty percent, affecting forty percent of the population. Although it is possible to reduce stunting rates by half within a decade, doing so will require a deviation from the traditional approach that primarily emphasizes nutrition and healthcare. On the contrary, a more comprehensive approach is required to prioritize the provision of sanitation and pure water, birth control services, improved living conditions, and heightened hygiene standards. Effectively tackling this challenge will necessitate strong collaboration across sectors, nationwide mobilization, behavioral modification campaigns, and consistent financial allocations equivalent to approximately 1% of GDP per annum. In addition, the adverse consequences of Pakistan's inadequate educational system worsen the effects of malnutrition. An alarming seventy-eight percent of children aged ten are illiterate relative to their grade level, and the number of children not enrolled in school exceeds twenty million.

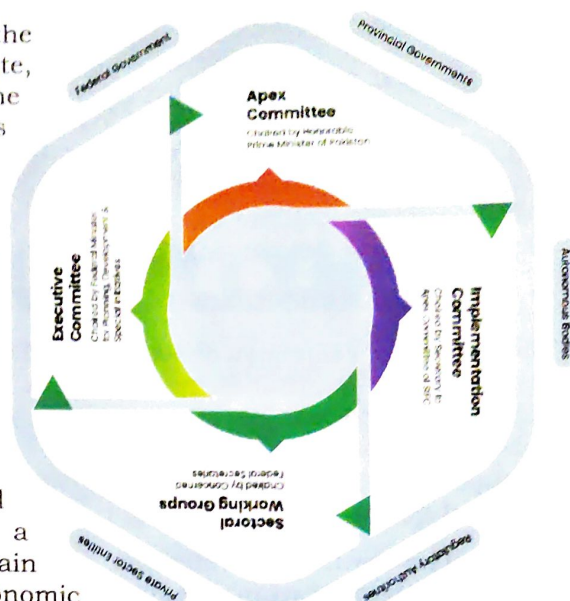
Furthermore, in order to fund the essential enhancements in the provision of services and the development of human capital, Pakistan must augment its fiscal capacity. Tax revenue has been persistently low at ten percent of GDP for a considerable duration. Through the expeditious elimination of expensive tax exemptions and the alleviation of compliance burdens, the nation could generate an additional three percent of GDP in revenues. An additional 3 percent of GDP could potentially be



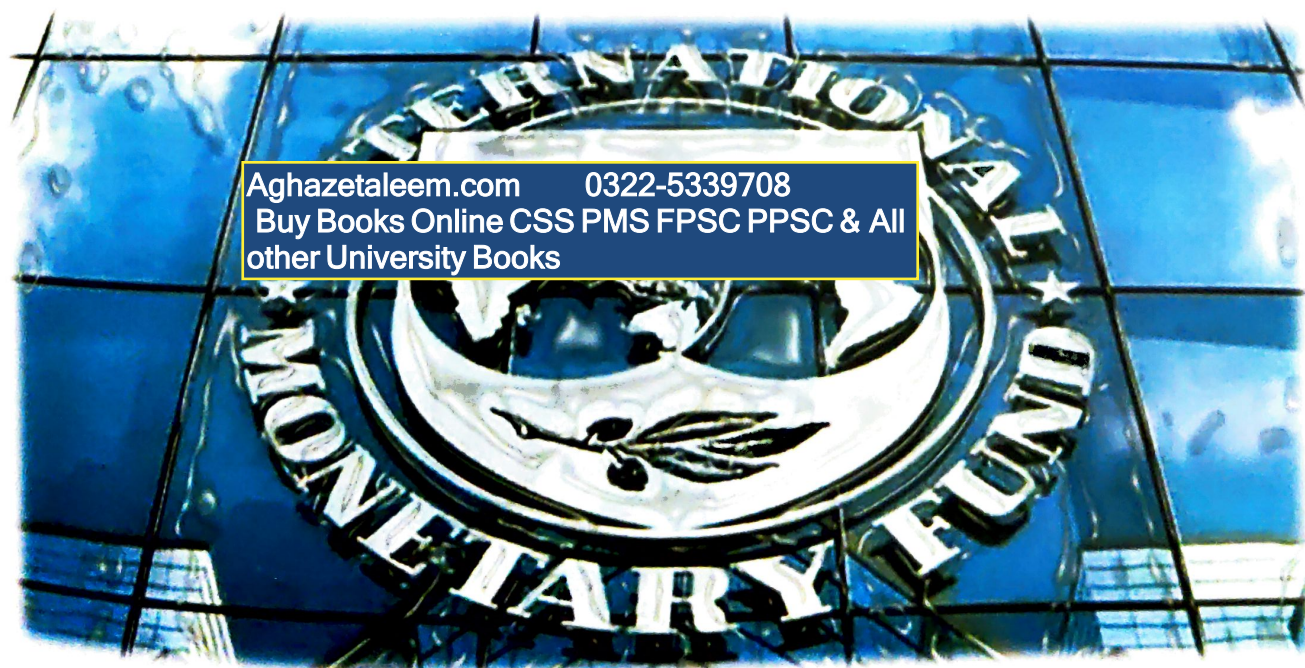
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generated at the provincial and local levels through the imposition of taxes on sectors including real estate, agriculture, and retail. Enhanced efficiency in the management of public resources may result in reductions in expenditures. In order to protect the interests of the impoverished, the majority of unprofitable public enterprises should be privatized, and ineffective subsidies in agriculture and energy should be reduced. The reduction of redundancies between federal and provincial expenditures has the potential to yield an additional three percent of GDP annually. Progressive fiscal reforms have the potential to generate over 12 percent of GDP in additional fiscal space over time, which is three times the amount of additional funds needed to address disparities in human development. The generated surplus would facilitate augmented infrastructure investments by the government and a mitigation of the public debt. Nevertheless, in order to attain sustainable public finances in Pakistan, robust economic expansion is ultimately critical. Pakistan must therefore strive for an economy that is more dynamic and accessible. Present policies obstruct productivity growth by distorting markets to benefit a select few. Excessive tariffs and currency overvaluation incentivize companies to concentrate on domestic markets, thereby discouraging exports. State intervention and a difficult business climate discourage investment, whereas tax distortions favor non-tradable sectors such as real estate.



It is necessary to level the playing field, encourage competition, reduce bureaucracy, and increase policy predictability in order to address these issues. Modernization of the agricultural sector is necessary to guarantee food security in the face of water scarcity and climate change. At present, subsidies and price controls ensnare producers in water-intensive, low-value crops. By reallocating subsidies towards research, veterinary services, and the promotion of regenerative agriculture, it is possible to augment incomes, productivity, and resilience in the face of climate disruptions. Urgent attention must be paid to energy sector efficiency in order to halt the depletion of public resources. While recent tariff increases have helped limit losses and protect consumers, high generation costs and transmission and distribution losses must be reduced to ensure long-term sustainability. Implementing cost-effective hydropower and solar resources necessitates the resolution of challenges related to distribution and transmission, potentially by fostering greater private investment, while safeguarding tariff modifications against political meddling.



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Implementing these reforms exclusively at the federal level is not feasible. It is necessary to grant local governments the authority to efficiently generate and allocate funds for local services. Reviving the decentralization agenda is necessary. Moreover, to guarantee that nobody falls behind, an expanded social safety net must accompany a dynamic economy. By enacting these essential reforms, Pakistan has the potential to achieve Upper-Middle Income status prior to its centennial in 2047. The nation is endowed with the requisite workforce and operational capabilities to successfully accomplish this objective. The prevailing economic crisis offers Pakistan a unique prospect to experience a momentous metamorphosis, designating the year 2024 as "Pakistan's moment."

### ➤ Cultural Revolution: Critical Factor in the Economic Revitalization of Pakistan

The enduring economic difficulties in Pakistan give rise to a multitude of propositions, frequently neglecting the cultural elements that exert an influence on economic results. It is my assertion that cultural transformation, in conjunction with traditional determinants such as investment and fiscal policy, is imperative for the rejuvenation of the nation's economy. This argument encompasses societal norms in addition to governmental institutions. An outline of the domains that require modification is provided below.

- ✓ **The profound religious sentiments prevalent in Pakistan frequently impede the implementation of advantageous economic instruments such as insurance.** This hesitancy arises from misunderstandings concerning religious compatibility, which hinders the attainment of financial stability and increases susceptibility to exploitative schemes.
- ✓ **Intellectual Humility and Tolerance: For economic development, it is vital to embrace diverse points of view.** However, the prevailing "my way or the highway" mentality in Pakistan hinders the flow of ideas that are essential for innovation and progress, thereby stifling intellectual dialogue.
- ✓ **Attitude Towards Wealth Creation: Opportunities for wealth creation are undermined by the tendency of society to disparage the wealthy.** It is essential, while acknowledging corruption, to acknowledge and celebrate legitimate wealth acquired through diligence and effort.
- ✓ **Ethical Work Practices: In the long run, economic credibility is hampered by reliance on fraudulent and time-saving methods.** Ensuring adherence to ethical principles in governance and commerce is critical for cultivating confidence and honesty in the community.
- ✓ **The lack of gender inclusivity in the workforce hinders economic development by underrepresenting women.** Promoting female involvement is crucial in order to attain sustainable expansion and disrupt the recurring pattern of diminished workforce involvement.

In addition to infrastructure development, Pakistan's economic transformation necessitates a cultural transition toward progressive, inclusive, and ethical values. Promoting gender inclusivity, embracing intellectual diversity, and cultivating ethical business practices are critical measures in the pursuit of sustainable economic growth.





Navigating the Climate Crisis: Reflections on COP28 and Urgent Action

# **Catalyzing Change: Assessing Climate Leadership at COP28**

## ➤ **Embracing Tomorrow: COP28's Historic Leap Towards Sustainable Energy**



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The COP28 climate summit in Dubai marked a significant shift towards reducing global fossil fuel consumption, signalling the transition away from the 'oil age'. The agreement, achieved after two weeks of negotiations, serves as a compelling message to investors and policymakers worldwide, highlighting the global community's shared responsibility and resolve to address the climate crisis and forge a sustainable path forward. The final text of the

conference of parties (COP) signifies the first formal acknowledgment within the COP framework of the imperative to transition from conventional, polluting energy sources like coal, oil, and gas to cleaner, renewable alternatives. The agreement lays the groundwork for future, more robust initiatives, providing a foundation for continued global dialogue on sustainable practices. While some countries may find the commitment less stringent than desired, the acknowledgment itself is a crucial precedent, recognizing the urgency of addressing climate change and shifting towards environmentally responsible energy sources. The agreement signifies a pivotal shift towards sustainable energy practices, articulating the imperative of a phased departure from fossil fuels by 2050. This language mirrors ongoing global initiatives as nations transition towards greener economies, as evidenced by a surge in renewable power installations. The strategy involves a tripling of global renewable energy capacity by 2030, expediting the reduction of coal usage, and advancing technologies like carbon capture and storage for industries resistant to decarbonization.

## ➤ **Bridging the Gap: From Rhetoric to Action in Climate Leadership**

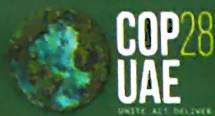
As governments worldwide strive to actualize these commitments, the deal encapsulates a cooperative, albeit pragmatic, blueprint for the international community to collectively address the climate crisis. The discourse around climate change champions in developed nations resonates as a crucial yet complex narrative, with developed nations projecting an image of climate activism but lacking substantial financial support for developing nations navigating the transition to cleaner energy sources. The real test of leadership lies not only in championing ideals but also in actively facilitating the necessary financial underpinnings for a global shift to sustainable practices. Without this substantive commitment, the rhetoric of climate leadership remains hollow, revealing a stark disconnect between words and meaningful action.

In 2015, COP21 was a pivotal moment when nations committed to curbing global temperature rise to the preindustrial benchmark of 1.5 degrees Celsius. This ambitious goal hinged on a three-pronged strategy involving mitigation, adaptation, and finance. However, the lingering challenge lies in securing adequate financial support, the linchpin for effective climate action. Scientists emphasize that breaching the 1.5-degree threshold may lead to irreversible and catastrophic consequences, such as melting ice formations, heightened extinction rates, alarming groundwater depletion, and intolerable heat levels. The COP series must transcend incremental progress and decisively address the financial impediment, ensuring that the collective commitment made in Paris transforms into a dynamic force capable of



averting irreversible environmental degradation. The clock is ticking, and the earth demands not just rhetoric but concrete, well-funded initiatives to secure a sustainable future.

In the past decade, the confluence of economic and political dynamics within the G7 and EU has hindered global unity in addressing the pressing existential crisis of our time. COP28 emerges as a potential turning point, but its efficacy hinges on the rich world's profound introspection regarding the current state of its democratic discourse in the coming year. This introspective process must transcend economic interests and political maneuvering, prioritizing a shared commitment to environmental stewardship and global well-being.



## COP 28 - Important Outcomes



### Major COP Outcomes Explained

- » **Transition Away From Fossil-Fuel-** Nearly 200 countries agreed to "transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems" at the COP28. The agreement is the first time countries have made this pledge.
- » **Global Renewables and Energy Efficiency Pledge-** Signatory countries to work together to **triple** the world's installed renewable energy generation capacity to at least 11,000 GW by 2030. The countries must collectively **double** the global average annual rate of energy efficiency improvements from around 2% to over 4% every year until 2030.
- » **Loss and Damage Fund-** Operationalization of the Loss and Damage (L&D) fund aimed at compensating countries grappling with climate change impacts. Commitments worth about **US\$ 800 million** had been made to the Fund. The World Bank will be the "interim host" of the fund for four years.
- » **Global Goal on Adaptation-** The draft text on the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) was introduced at COP 28. It aims to enhance climate change adaptation by increasing awareness and funding towards countries' adaptation needs in the context of the 1.5/2°C goal of the Paris Agreement
- » **The Global Cooling Pledge-** 66 national government signatories committed to working together to **reduce** cooling-related emissions across all sectors **by at least 68% globally** relative to 2022 levels by 2050.
- » **Declaration to Triple Nuclear Energy-** The declaration launched at COP28 aims to **triple** global nuclear energy capacity by 2050. It was endorsed by 22 National Governments.
- » **Coal Transition Accelerator-** France, in collaboration with various countries and organizations, introduced the Coal Transition Accelerator. The initiative aims to leverage best practices and lessons learned for effective coal transition policies.
- » **CHAMP Initiative-** Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnership (CHAMP) for Climate Action was launched at COP 28. This initiative aims at efficient planning, financing, implementation, and monitoring of climate strategies
- » **Climate Finance-** Under the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) for climate finance, wealthy nations owe developing countries **USD 500 billion** in 2025.

### ➤ Crossroads of Crisis: Reflections on 2023 and the Urgency of Climate Action

As one quarter of 2024 has already passed, it is crucial to consider whether 2023 was another year wasted in our fight against the sixth extinction or the year we turned a corner. With only six years left to cut global CO2 emissions by 45% from 2010 levels, we need to drop by 9.2% per year. The Chinese Academy of Sciences has warned that the strong El Niño in 2023-2024 is predicted to trigger a cascade of climate crises, including marine heatwave intensification, ocean deoxygenation, damage to marine ecosystems, sea-level rise, crop yield reduction, and oceanic diversity reduction. A University of Exeter report warns that we are at risk of crossing five boundaries known as "tipping points" within the next decade, which could lead to abrupt or irreversible changes in the natural world, severely damage our planet's life-support systems, and threaten the stability of our societies. The Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC), known as the Gulf Stream, could shut down completely by 2025. This raises concerns about biodiversity, as the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has



long been the gold standard when evaluating the percentage of species at risk of extinction. A Queen's University Belfast report highlighted the threat of population declines in 71,000 animal species, with 33% showing population declines globally. The majority of declines are occurring in the tropics, but in the US, range-wide collapse threatens 41% of ecosystems and 34% of plants and 40% of animals. In the UK, around 16% of all species are at risk of extinction, and 43% of birds, 31% of reptiles, 26% of mammals, and 54% of flowering plant species are threatened. Economic development, causing climate and biodiversity crises, has led to homelessness and chronic hunger. The Numbeo Index showed positive progress until 2016, but since then, things have declined. The United Nations Human Development Index (HDI) also saw a regression in 90% of countries in both 2020 and 2021. While most people on Earth have felt the pinch in recent years, some are doing better than ever, with the fortunes of billionaires increasing by \$2.7 billion a day and the richest one percent grabbing almost two-thirds of new wealth since 2020.

### ➤ Navigating the Shadows: Assessing the Depths of COP28's Impact

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At COP28 in Dubai, elected leaders agreed that transitioning away from fossil fuels was necessary to address global climate change. However, the success of this decision was criticized for being so low-key that it took an ant to climb underneath. Agriculture, responsible for a third of global emissions and the primary driver of biodiversity loss, was also discussed at the conference. Major players like Bayer, JBS, and Nutrien were present in record numbers to prevent the necessary changes. Ignoring the situation and hoping for change will result in climate chaos and social breakdown. To avoid planetary turmoil, we must disobey those responsible for ruining our future in exchange for GDP growth. Some easy actions for industrialized people include changing who we get our household energy from and how we energize our bodies, moving to renewable energy suppliers, and adopting plant-based diets. However, governments have shown they cannot offer long-term security and have torn up the social contract between us. COP28 also made progress on the Paris Agreement and negotiated vital issues to mitigate and adapt to climate change. The Loss and Damage Fund (L&D) was operationalized, with \$700 million pledges made by various countries. However, there are several challenges ahead for the L&D Fund to fully operationalize and achieve its objectives. The \$700 million pledged to the L&D Fund covers less than 0.2% of the amount required to cover the losses faced by developing countries due to climate change catastrophes. Key questions related to the L&D Fund's functioning include mode of fund



distribution, mechanism of selection of recipient countries, and accountability of fund utilization in recipient countries. Parties need to deliberate and find sustainable mechanisms for the smooth functioning of this fund.

### ➤ Unveiling the Opportunities and Challenges of COP28's Global Stocktake

The Global Stocktake agreed upon by a majority of 200 participating countries at COP28 calls for a tripling of renewable energy capacity and double energy efficiency improvements by 2030. This includes accelerating efforts towards the phase-down of coal power, phasing out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies, and other measures to drive the transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems in a just, orderly, and equitable manner. However, the language contains loopholes that provide opportunities for fossil fuel industries to maintain their monopoly. The lack of an accountability mechanism in the event of failure to meet the phase-down targets undermines the set targets. Many countries that agreed on the stocktake are expanding their fossil fuel industries, raising the issue of climate justice. Developments made in different areas of climate finance are considered important progress. Six countries pledged new funding for the Green Climate Fund at COP28, but this development is still far short of the initial promise of collecting \$100 billion annually in the GCF. COP28 also discussed issues of inclusion, gender, young people, indigenous communities, and differently-abled persons. It became the first climate conference to recognize resilient food systems' as an important strategy for adaptation. The Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems, and Climate Action has been endorsed by 158 countries, symbolizing the vulnerability of the agriculture system and the need to adapt it according to the challenges of climate change.

### ➤ Unraveling the Intersectionality of Climate Change and Social Justice

Climate change is a global challenge that creates problems of social justice in multiple ways. The Industrial Revolution led to unsustainable patterns of economic growth and prosperity, with the beneficiary countries enjoying financial growth and control over the world economic system at the expense of the poor countries of the Global South. Climate change is causing severe food crises in eight countries, including South Sudan, Madagascar, Pakistan, Somalia, Sudan, Chad, Sahel, and the Dry Corridor. These poor nations are facing economic and social unrest due to food insecurity, which worsens their already deteriorating conditions. Vulnerable groups like women, children, differently-abled persons, transgender people, and elderly people are particularly affected by climate change-led disasters. Financial crises lead to domestic violence, increased crime against women and girls, and inadequate health facilities for women during such disasters. Indigenous communities, which rely on natural resources for livelihood, also face the severe effects of climate change. The UN High Commissioner on Human Rights warns that over 370 million indigenous peoples' livelihoods and cultural identities are already under threat. Climate-led disasters make the poor even poorer, perpetuating a vicious cycle of poverty. Financial crises force the poor to lose opportunities to educate their children and secure better jobs, while rich people have diversified sources of earnings and savings to resist such calamities. Geographical locations, such as in South Asian countries like Pakistan, India, and Nepal, make them vulnerable to glacier melting and sea level rise. Between 2010 and 2020, human mortality from floods, droughts, and storms was 15 times higher in highly vulnerable regions. Climate change deepens socio-economic and political inequalities within and between states, raising concerns about social justice and equity.



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### ➤ Building Resilience: Navigating Pakistan's Climate-Induced Disasters Through Equitable Development and Comprehensive Risk Reduction Strategies

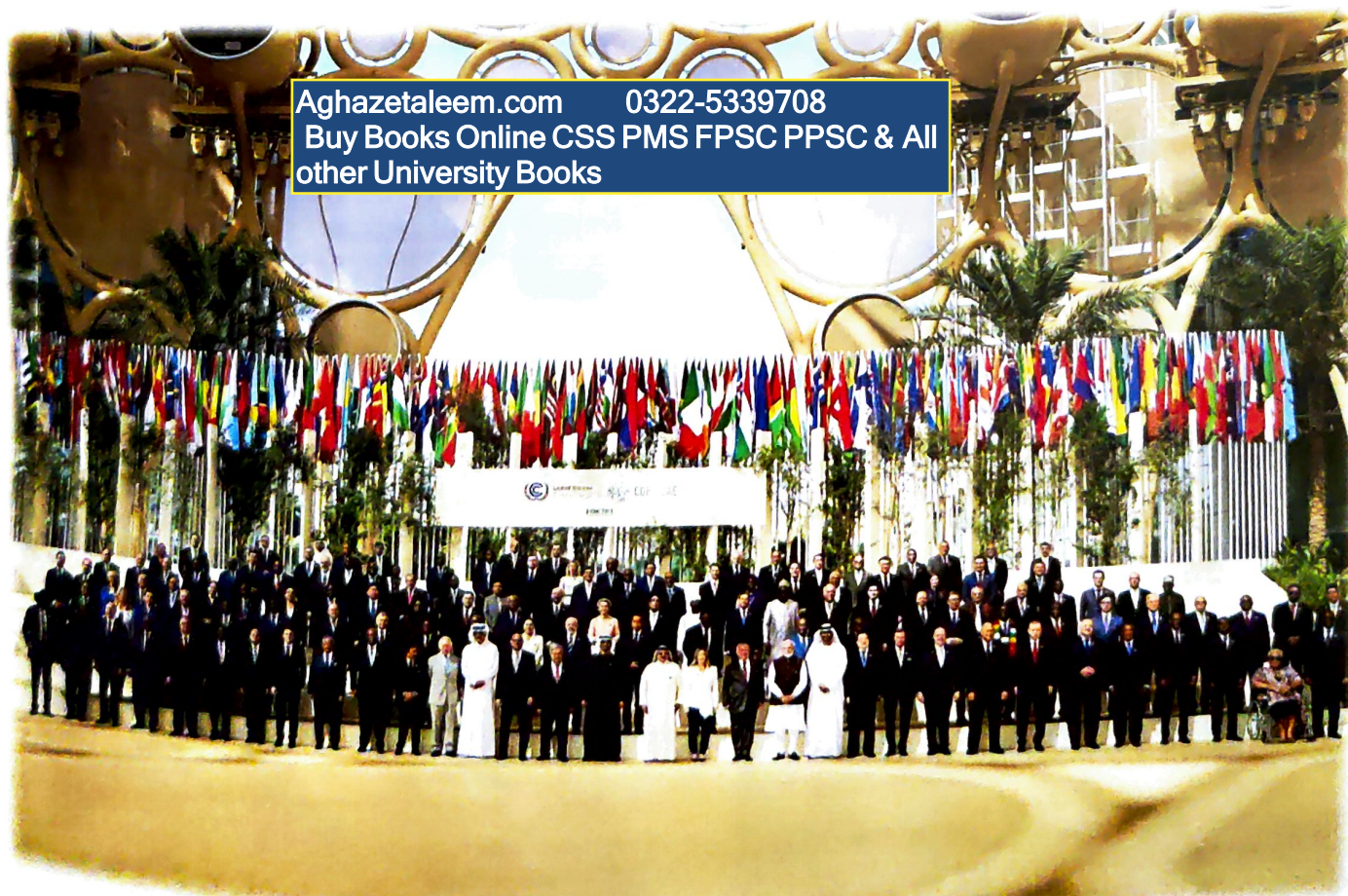
Climate-induced disasters, such as floods and earthquakes, have a more severe impact on vulnerable populations, especially those living in poverty. Pakistan, categorized as high-risk for such disasters, has experienced significant natural disasters, leading to extensive socio-economic and infrastructural losses. Unsustainable developmental practices, such as overexploitation of mountain ecosystems and illegal



encroachments, further exacerbate these disruptions. The 2010 monsoon flood disaster in Pakistan caused a significant financial loss of \$10 billion, resulting in 2000 deaths, the destruction of 17,553 villages, and an impact on 160,000 sq km of the country. The floods also exposed critical deficiencies in disaster preparedness and response mechanisms, with weak coordination among agencies and duplicate roles. Emergency response gaps, such as inadequate supplies, a lack of communication, and infrastructure damage, compounded the challenges. The convergence of climate-related disasters and broader economic issues has created a vulnerable environment for Pakistan, highlighting the urgent need for comprehensive and equitable financial support to break free from this detrimental debt cycle. Centralized coordination mechanisms at the national level serve as linchpins for effective planning and execution of developmental and relief activities. Pakistan needs to transition towards a technologically driven, forward-thinking, and adaptable disaster risk reduction (DRR) framework and approach. An indigenous, need-based, and geographically-specific disaster risk reduction and response mechanism is necessary. Communities are the first responders to disasters, and communities need to be taken on board while devising any policy or disaster response mechanism to ensure a more agile and responsive framework. Incorporating disaster risk reduction principles into public-sector initiatives and harnessing community perspectives through inclusive engagement can strengthen Pakistan's defenses against the ravages of natural and human-induced disasters.

### ➤ **Harmonizing Societal Dynamics: Integrating Karl Marx's Conflict Theory and Structural Functionalism**

Karl Marx's conflict theory and structural functionalism offer unique insights that can be applied to the realm of climate change policy, particularly in the context of Pakistan. Conflict theory highlights the stark disparities between those who contribute most to environmental degradation and those who bear the brunt of its consequences. Structural functionalism emphasizes the interdependence of societal components and their contribution to overall stability, advocating for a holistic strategy that leverages the strengths of each component to achieve effective climate change mitigation and adaptation. To develop a comprehensive, effective, and equitable climate change strategy for Pakistan, the following detailed recommendations can be employed, integrating insights from both Karl Marx's conflict theory and structural functionalism.









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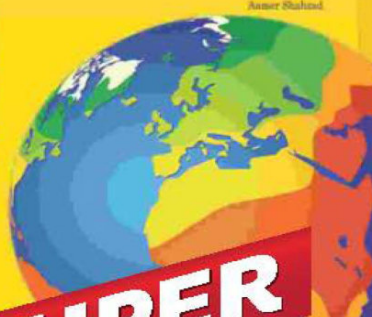

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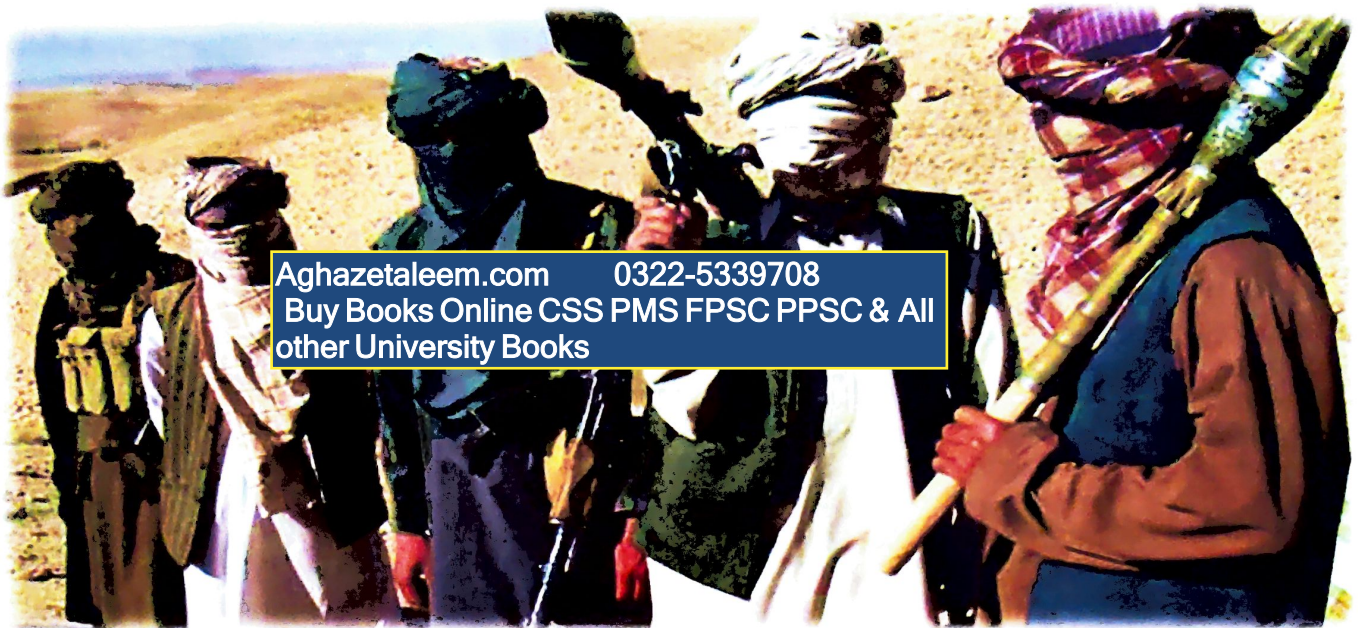
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## Navigating Afghanistan's Complex Dynamics

# Renewed Wave of Terrorism:

## Strategic Imperatives & Transforming Security Paradigms



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Pakistan is facing a renewed wave of militancy and terrorism, with recent incidents targeting Chinese nationals, strategic locations, and the Iran-Pakistan Gas Pipeline. These attacks aim to maintain socio-political instability, security threats, and economic tremulousness in the country. The wave of terrorism began after 9/11, which was planned, conceived, and executed at the US, but its fallouts were felt in Pakistan and Afghanistan until 2021. After the pull-out of US and NATO forces, the occupying powers imposed the Taliban Government in the war-torn country for a new phase of terrorism. This phase focuses on sabotage the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, economically ruin and exploit Pakistan, ensuring its dependency over the IMF and World Bank, and harm Chinese economic and strategic projects.

### ➤ **Challenges at the Border: Pakistan's Struggle Against External Terrorism and Afghan Instability**

The Pakistani military has successfully fought against externally imposed terrorism with bravery and enthusiasm, but the goal was never the agenda or desire of those who conceptualized the idea of terrorism against Pakistan. They wanted more to be done against Pakistan, so they renewed the concept with changed methodology. The Taliban Government in Afghanistan, whom the US declared as a terrorist outfit during its prolonged stay in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2021, is being sustained through various direct and indirect approaches. Despite repeated requests to the Taliban Government in Afghanistan for stoppage of terrorism through TTP and its splinter groups, there is no let-up in the attacks from Afghan soil. The main objective of TTP's terrorist campaign against Pakistan has been to force the Government Pakistan to give them concessions and areas for their own rule within the boundaries of Pakistan. The Pakistani military is alert against the happenings and the nefarious designs of external forces and combats the well-planned terrorism aimed at ruining Pakistan through direct and indirect strategies. Pakistan is the only country whose security situation has deteriorated after the takeover of Afghanistan by the Afghan Taliban in August 2021. Afghan soil is rapidly becoming a confluence of various spying networks to train, finance, equip, and abet terrorists to conduct terrorist attacks in Pakistan.

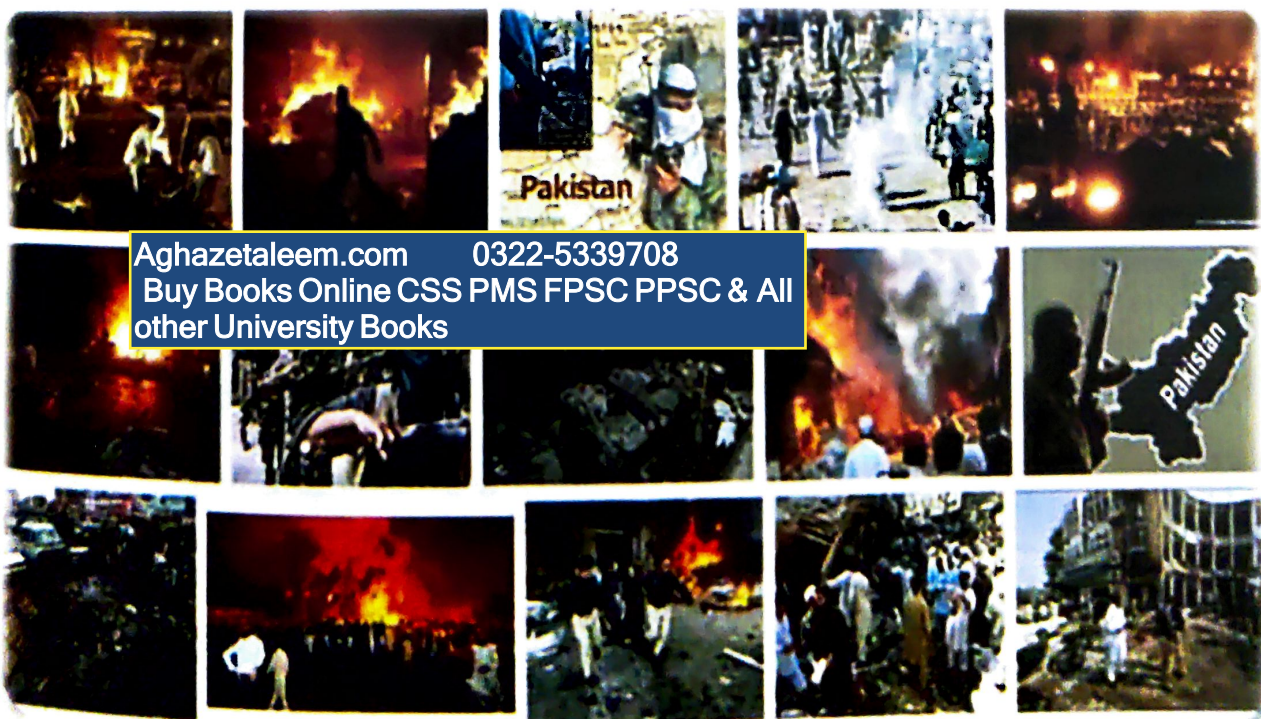


## ➤ Unveiling the Shadows: The Alleged Nexus of Indian Intelligence Agencies and State-Sponsored Terrorism

Terrorism has become a global concern, with state-sponsored terrorism becoming a major concern. The Indian Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), created in 1968 to strengthen India's external intelligence capabilities, has been accused of engaging in clandestine operations and meddling in local conflicts and domestic political matters. This has led to allegations of extremism and state-sponsored violence, particularly in the context of Hindutva, a nationalist movement based on Hindu supremacy. The alleged participation of Indian intelligence operatives in the conspiracy to kill a Sikh leader in the US has sent shockwaves through the international community, prompting investigations and condemnations. This pattern is further reinforced by reports that connect Indian operatives to the murder of Sikh leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Canada, presenting a worrisome image of state-approved extrajudicial violence. Such claims highlight the pressing need for an extensive probe into India's intelligence establishment and the involvement of government players in terror attacks abroad. The world community has taken note of the seriousness of India's suspected state terrorism, with comments from international leaders like Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and testimony by US Assistant Secretary of State Donald Lu before the US Congress Committee revealing the depth of India's alleged state terrorism, implicating Indian government officials in the nefarious plot. The gravity of the situation and the pressing need for an open inquiry into India's intelligence operations are highlighted by their demands for justice and responsibility. India's intelligence agencies are accused of forsaking their duty to maintain national security in favor of extrajudicial measures meant to advance the goal of the ruling regime, all under the shadow of Narendra Modi's leadership. Ensuring justice for the victims of state-sponsored terrorism and breaking the dark web of Indian intelligence requires transparency, accountability, and respect for democratic norms.

## ➤ Securing Prosperity: Balancing Security and Economic Cooperation in the China-Pakistan Relationship

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's upcoming official visit to China, intended to strengthen the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), is clouded by concerns following two recent terrorist attacks targeting Chinese nationals. Pakistan swiftly condemned the attacks, emphasizing the safety of Chinese nationals and projects. Conversely, China strongly condemned the attack, urging Pakistan to investigate and ensure the safety of Chinese nationals and CPEC projects. During Premier Shehbaz's visit to Pakistan, security threats are likely to be a key focus, underscoring the delicate balance between economic cooperation and security in the Pakistan-China





relationship. Pakistan reaffirmed its commitment to providing high-level security for Chinese workers involved in the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Both sides committed to accelerating CPEC's second phase and forming a working group for various corridors, including job creation, innovation, green energy, and regional development. Discussions emphasized a strategic approach to maximize the success of Special Economic Zones (SEZs), with proposals for knowledge exchange visits and collaboration with Chinese provinces and industry groups. The importance of enhancing regional connectivity through projects like Gwadar Port and the M-8 motorway was highlighted to strengthen trade links and regional integration. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) faces numerous internal and external security threats, posing challenges to its successful implementation. Internally, insurgent groups and ethnic-based separatist movements in the Balochistan province have targeted CPEC infrastructure projects, aiming to disrupt operations and undermine the region's stability. Externally, the geopolitical rivalry between India and Pakistan poses a significant threat, with India viewing CPEC as a strategic encroachment by China into South Asia. Moreover, the volatile security situation in Afghanistan poses risks of spillover effects, as terrorist organizations like TTP, IS-K, and other extremist groups exploit the porous borders to launch attacks on CPEC installations or personnel. Addressing these multifaceted security challenges requires robust cooperation between China, Pakistan, and regional stakeholders, along with comprehensive security measures and diplomatic efforts to mitigate risks and safeguard the viability of CPEC. To effectively address security challenges within the CPEC, a multifaceted strategy is imperative, including establishing a dedicated CPEC Security Force, legislative measures, strengthening people-to-people interactions, encouraging Chinese language learning among students, and facilitating university partnerships for exchanges and scholarships. By implementing these measures, Pakistan can bolster security and ensure the success and sustainability of the CPEC initiative.

### ➤ **Strategic Imperatives: Navigating Afghanistan's Complex Dynamics for the International Economic Community**

The International Economic Community (IEA) faces a complex situation in Afghanistan, with IS-K being the biggest threat. The internal politics within the IEA, which are leveraging TTP against Pakistan for tactical gains, complicate the situation for Kabul. The IEA is wrong in believing that Pakistan will compromise on the TTP issue, that TTP will acquiesce to saner voices within the Emirate suggesting restraint, and that TTP can be resolved through negotiations. The IEA should focus on addressing the immediate variables with spoiler potential in bilateralism, such as TTP, bilateral trade, and the Durand Line, while pursuing historic constants of common geography, ethnic ties, inter-dependence, trade relations, and religious affinity. On TTP, the most problematic variable should be developing a consensus within the IEA over handling, disposal, and future of TTP. If TTP is to be used against IS-K, it should be merged with the IEA Army. If retained as a leverage against Pakistan, such notions should be corrected. The IEA should outlaw anti-Pakistan violence through a "verifiable and enforceable" fatwa, and elements within TTP unwilling to fall in line should be dealt with "in close collaboration" with Pakistan. TTP cadre should be dispersed all over Afghanistan, and Pakistan may be requested some logistic assistance. IEA should also make concerted efforts to educate its functionaries and public that Pakistan is not their sworn enemy like the former USSR or the West Plus.

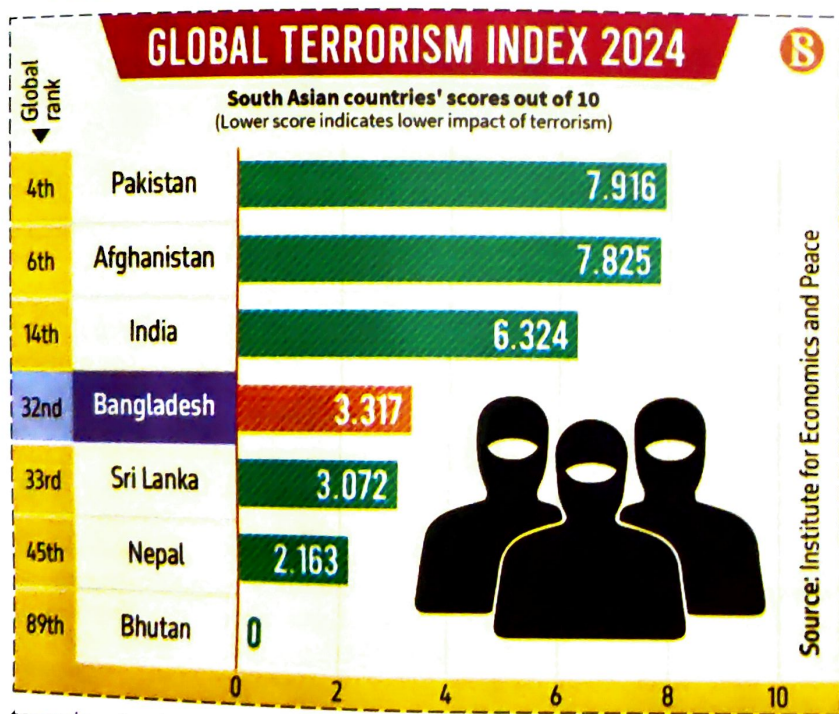




## ➤ Navigating the Afghan Quagmire: Pakistan's Dilemma in Combating Terrorism and Extremism

The return of the Taliban to power in August 2021 was both a matter of joy and comfort for Islamabad, but tension with Afghanistan has turned into a battleground. Tension with Afghanistan presents one of the major foreign policy and security challenges to the newly installed government, as the escalating incidents of terrorism can easily eclipse any development initiative involving foreign investment. Combating the TTP is becoming difficult due to the Afghan government's reluctance to take action against them. Pakistan has attacked the militants in Afghanistan earlier but never acknowledged them, which is a tacit warning to the Afghan regime that if it fails to take action against TTP, Pakistan will not hesitate to take the war across the border. Instead of mellowing down, the Kabul regime has taken a definite position after the strikes, with the Afghan defence minister stating that his country would use every force to defend its national sovereignty. The situation in the region is not peaceful, and cross-border militant attacks on Pakistani security forces can become hostile anytime. The new government has taken a cautious approach to dealing with the situation, showing interest in solving terrorism issues with Afghanistan through dialogue. A delegation led by Commerce Secretary Khurram Aga has arrived in Afghanistan to open talks on bilateral trade. Both sides have pledged to tackle existing hurdles in the transit areas with joint and concerted measures. Pakistan is right to blame the Afghan regime for disregarding the escalation in the TTP attack on Pakistan's security forces. However, Pakistan's lack of a coherent counterterrorism strategy has been a significant contributing factor in the return of TTP in a more organized form. Coupled with the never-ending political instability, a perfect condition to hatch militancy.

## ➤ Transforming Security Paradigms: Combating Terrorism and Extremism in Pakistan's Newly Merged Districts



To influence a foreign country to take action against the enemy when, internally, Pakistan is divided both politically and economically, the starting point would be overhauling the security paradigm with clear demarcation between civilian and military law enforcement agencies and intelligence apparatus responsibilities. The merger of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) into Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP) in 2018 marked a significant shift in the governance and security dynamics of the region. However, the transition has been marred by persistent challenges, particularly concerning terrorism and extremism in the Newly Merged Districts (NMDs). The drivers of

terrorism in the NMDs are varied and complex, stemming from socio-economic, political, security, and ideological factors. Socio-economic disparities, poverty, limited access to education and employment opportunities, weak governance structures, corruption, and ethnic and tribal tensions exacerbate security challenges. Geographical proximity to conflict zones, such as the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, exposes the NMDs to spillover effects of violence, while inadequate border management facilitates the movement of militants and illicit goods. Addressing effective measures to combat terrorism and extremism and preventing the wave of terrorism in Newly Merged Districts involves several approaches. These include promoting infrastructure and functional mechanisms, applying Lederach's pyramid as a problem-solving framework, desensitizing and demilitarizing the environment of NMDs, implementing sophisticated reforms in the National Action Plan (NAP), fostering harmony among civil-military relations, and establishing and improving its relationship with Afghanistan.



## S H A R I N G S U C C E S S

## NOA, CSS &amp; ME

Written By: Mr. Wahaj Rahim (64<sup>th</sup> Position in CSS 2023, PCS)

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When I was young, I used to imagine what it would feel like to serve my nation and to do something big enough for my country. I was never the child who got 90%+ marks but was always a bright and intelligent one. If one might ask me, How would I summarize my journey to becoming the person I am today? I would probably have more failures to tell than successes. From failing to get admission into the university of my choice to my final year project failing thirty days before its final deadline, I have a plethora of failures to talk about. From singing, beatboxing, being part of my college choir, getting a silver medal, two departmental distinctions, my Final Year Project (FYP) getting highlighted in the mainstream media and becoming a CSP officer, my teachers, my family members and my friends have been a great support in my life. However, this story is about my civil service journey and NOA being at the helm of my success with its faculty literally taking me by the hand like a toddler and guiding me through the arduous journey that is passing the CSS exam.

## ➤ NOA: My Second Home

I still remember the day that I walked through the doors of the NOA High Court Campus, feeling scared and nearly fainting at the sight of the syllabus in my hand. The credit for getting me out of that nauseatic feeling and helping me settle in my comfort zone goes to the faculty of NOA. NOA has indeed not only groomed me but has also helped me become the gentleman that I am today. If someone would ask me, "What would you take away with you to the Civil Services Academy (CSA)?" I would probably tell them, "I will take Sir Fareed's faith, Sir Hassan Ali Gondal's enthusiasm, Sir Baba Khel's three score years of wisdom, Sir Ali's kindness, Sir Mazhar's dedication, Sir Azhar Afzal Mir's determination, and Sir Huzaifa's friendliness with me." I would consider myself a student who had all the motivation in the world and the determination to become a little cog in the bigger machine of Pakistan's bureaucratic engine, but without direction. NOA and its faculty provided me with the necessary direction and guidance to channel my efforts. I would, without any doubt, consider NOA my second home.

## ➤ THE CSS GRIND AND NOA

CSS, no doubt, is a very tough examination, but I believe it to be a test of the nerves rather than a test of a person's knowledge. Throughout my whole journey, I have found the NOA teaching faculty to be my ray of shining light at the end of every dark tunnel I faced. Whether it be the great subject selection dilemma or the faculty listening to your personal rants, I have found that the most reliable friends I had during my stay at NOA were none other than the faculty. From hearing my personal issues and resolving them, along with great constructive feedback from my teachers, I was in no time in my zone here at NOA. The faculty automatically sensed my potential, carefully nurtured my strengths, and kept me at bay from the mental stress that came with the preparation. One of the major problems that I have faced in my entire life is not being able to memorize anything without being able to know the 'why?' behind things. I still remember, like yesterday, that I would inbox the faculty members, asking them to clear



my doubts. The faculty of NOA grabs you by the hand and never lets you go, even if it's past their work hours.

## ➤ Personal Experiences and Efforts



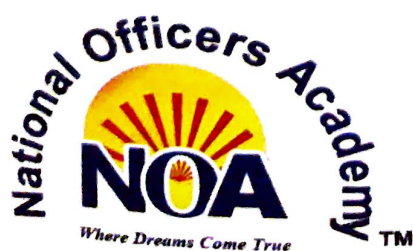
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I am a great believer in studying something only if it's interesting and doesn't feel like a chore. Consequently, I chose International Relations, Criminology, Gender Studies, Anthropology and U.S. History. Some people might select those subjects that overlap with the Provincial Management Service (PMS), but I chose the subjects based on my personal taste and still managed to pass both exams in my first attempt. From my above-mentioned experience, it is very evident that subject selection based upon a person's personal liking and disliking can also bear similar fruits and also lighten up your mood while studying them. I myself faced a lot of criticism for leaving good jobs in Pakistan and also abroad because of my passion to serve my country rather than sit on the sidelines and criticize. From having a great knack for machine designing to becoming a civil

servant, I have realized that one must always follow what his or her heart wants. My teachers at NOA shielded me from the criticism and allowed me to focus on my studies. Resultantly, I managed to secure my third preference in my maiden attempt. I would suggest to the readers that they always try to give something back to their country, no matter how small. From designing a patent worthy machine with high efficiency to becoming a civil servant, I have always tried to give something back to my country and have tried to improve its image. My mother always used to say, "We need to lighten up our own candle, and even if the candle is blown out, others might see your effort and carry your flame forward." I also found out that doing simple things such as shaving, waking up early or even tying your own tie every day has a great effect on your motivation. Similarly, some people might believe in keeping backups, but I have found out that having no backups helps you focus better on your goal. Consequently, I gave up on every job opportunity I had and focused solely on my CSS attempt.

## ➤ The Epilogue

The goal always has to be to become a better person. NOA has made me into a better person and the gentleman that I am today. "If Allah were to allow me to bow down before someone other than himself, I would surely bow down before my teachers." Life is a bridge of endless struggles; one must always meet life's challenges head on and never be afraid to fail. NOA has been and will always be my second home.



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نورا نور محمد بن گیا

# Muhammad Abdullah Raja

(CSS 2023 – 19<sup>th</sup> in Pakistan – 1<sup>st</sup> in AJK - PAS)

## Tell us something about yourself.

My name is Muhammad Abdullah Raja. I hail from Bhimber, AJK. I have been an avid debater and orator throughout my academic journey and won multiple interdepartmental, regional, national and international English declamation contests. This was my second attempt for CSS.

## What is your academic background?

I have my graduation in English Literature and Linguistics from NUML, Islamabad and another bachelors in political science from Sargodha University.

## What are your aspirations in life?

I belong from an area where education is said to be futile, and people prefer to move to abroad. I wanted to set a precedent that one can achieve anything with good education, and one should stay here to serve their nation. You can call me a patriot or a hopeless romantic, up to you, but this is the motivation that kept me going. Now I aim to set an example for youth of my area and serve people of my country with best of my abilities.

## Why CSS?

Initially, I wanted to Pakistan Military and I got recommended in 138 PMA long course but unfortunately I got medically unfit. The goal was always to serve this nation and I only changed the roadmap, now through civil services.

## Your Favourite Quotation

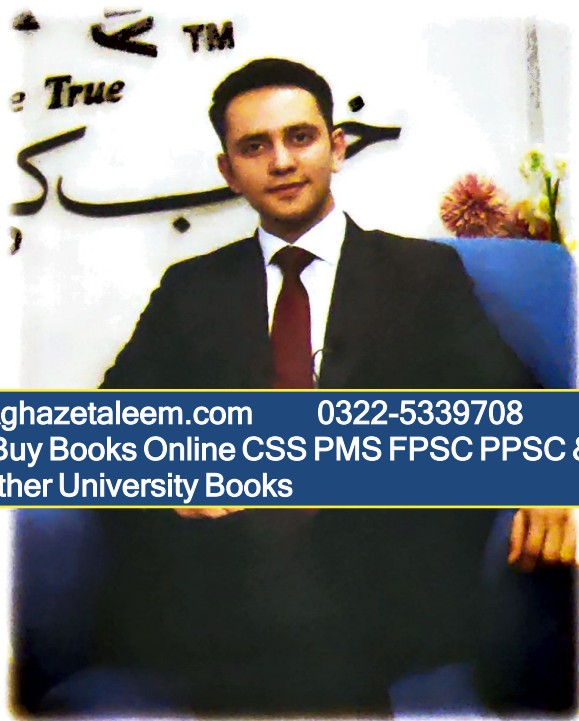
**"Carpe Diem" – "Seize the day" from the movie, Dead Poets Society**

## Your Favourite Book

**"Arms and the Man" by George Bernard Shaw, A beautiful play.**

## When did you start preparing for the exam?

I started in January 2021, and appeared in CSS 2022. Unfortunately I failed essay although I scored 699 marks overall. CSS 2023 was my second attempt and I scored 720 marks in the written. It took 3.5 years but finally, prayers were answered.



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**Has this journey been easy for you and what do you have to say about the difficulty level of these exams?**

The process has been tiresome and many times I felt like giving up but the lesson would be: this process is not difficult but lengthy. All you need to do is stay consistent and dedicated to the process.

**How much time did you give to the preparation?**

There were days when I studied for 15 hours a day and then there were weeks when I did nothing. I had to convince myself to stay on track for just one

more day, one more week, and one more month. Everyday I woke up with a new motivation, reminding myself of the fruits of my labor.

**What was your study approach towards the deal breaker that is English?**

After suffering at the hands of multiple mentors in the market and realizing that essay is used as a tool of fear for lucrative benefits, I read examiner reports and asked for the help of Sir Ali Shahab and Sir M. Ali Khan from NOA. Sir Ali Shahab is excellent for your precis paper and Sir M. Ali Khan was extremely kind to entertain my requests to evaluate my outlines.

**Do you think one gets in the exam exactly what one had prepared?**

Absolutely not. You will have to prepare yourselves to deal with anything that FPSC throws at you. Preparation is compulsory but in the end you ll have to use all your knowledge and preparation to tackle those questions but if you have studied from Sir Hassan Ali Gondal, you are good to go.

**What was your approach towards subject selection?**

I carefully analyzed my interests and went for subjects in which I was interested rather than seeking help from mentors and counsellors who exploit you for your money and in return give you 5 minutes of their time. Sir Hassan Ali Gondal was kind enough to put an end to my confusion regarding subjects and provided me with clarity in the form of suggestions, instead of imposing his choices on me.

**How did you divide your preparation time among different subjects?**

One subject at a time. I couldn't multitask, you might.

**Did you consider the scoring trend while choosing your optionals or you brushed this aspect off?**

Only for one group. Go with regional languages: Punjabi, Pashto, or Sindhi. Other than these, go for anything you are interested in.

**Knowing that you are an avid reader, did you read all the important books of the contemporary times?**

I focused on the syllabus first. Once I was done with that, I consulted good sources to add value to my writings such as international authors and magazines.

**What were your optional subjects?**

- ✓ IR
- ✓ GENDER
- ✓ US HISTORY
- ✓ CRIMINOLOGY
- ✓ PUNJABI

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## Strategy to Tackle the compulsory Subjects

**Essay** Improve grammar, practice, evaluation, REPEAT

**Precis** Improve grammar, practice, evaluation, REPEAT

**Pakistan Affairs & Current Affairs** Take classes of Sir Hassan Ali Gondal. Trust me, that's all you would need.

**General Science & Ability** Focus on ability portion more. It might save you at your most critical point.

**Islamic Studies** Memorizing AYATS and AHADEES is super important

## Bulls' Eye Hit in the Optional Subjects

**How did you substantiate your answers?** Draw charts, diagrams, infographics, and maps. Along with good and catchy headings.

**Significance of Illustrations-flowcharts, maps and figures** Extremely important if you want to score high. Most important part of your answer.

**Length of answer and number of arguments** 6 to 8 pages would be perfect along with maps, charts and diagrams.

**One Window solution to score well in the optionals** Learn to improve your paper presentation. It will take you to the top of merit list.

### How was your experience at National Officers Academy?

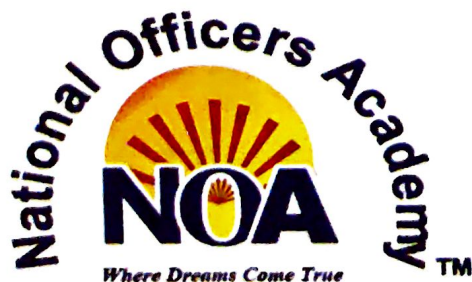
NOA has been extremely kind to me. I would dedicate my attempt, firstly to Sir M. Ali Khan, Sir Hassan Ali Gondal and Sir Ali Shahab. Secondly, to Madam Hina in the admin dept who were kind enough to give us space in the free classrooms to practice our essays and papers even though we weren't studying anymore at NOA. That kind gesture from NOA administration and Madam Hina would always hold a special place in my heart. Once you are a part of NOA, you are always a part of it.

### Would you like to give any special message for CSS candidates?

Stay dedicated and motivated to the process and when you feel like giving up, tell your self to stay on track for just one more day.

### To whom do you attribute the credit for your success?

First and foremost, I attribute the credit for my success to the Almighty Allah. His blessings have been the cornerstone of my journey. Additionally, the unwavering support of my family and mentors played a pivotal role.



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